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CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
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МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

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Charenton-le-Pont, 5 October 2021

H. E. Mr Henok Teferra Shawl
Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to France, Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of Ethiopia to UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75015 Paris

**World Heritage List 2022 – Additional Information**
**The Gedeo Cultural Landscape (Ethiopia)**

Dear Ambassador,

ICOMOS is currently assessing the nomination of "The Gedeo Cultural Landscape" as a World Heritage site and an ICOMOS evaluation mission has visited the property to consider matters related to protection, management and conservation, as well as issues related to integrity and authenticity.

In order to help with our overall evaluation process, we would be grateful to receive further information to augment what has already been submitted in the nomination dossier.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points and kindly provide additional information:

**Maps**
The maps provided do not show the disposition of settlements within the nominated property or the line of roads. Could the State Party please provide a more detailed map that show these details as well as a precise delineation of the protected megalithic sites?

**Comparative analysis and boundaries**
More details are needed to explain the rationale for the boundaries of the nominated property. The comparative analysis has, so far, not addressed the need to justify precisely why the nominated area can be seen as exceptional in comparison with other parts of the Gedeo region or within other areas of south and south-west Ethiopia. It merely suggests that the Gedeo area is 'representative' of these other larger areas.

Further clarity is needed as megalithic sites are also present in the Sidama area and elsewhere in south and south-west of Ethiopia. And the 25 million people who live in these areas, such as the Sidama, Gamo-Gofa, Ari, Kaffa, Shakka, Yem, Gurage, Wolayta, Dauro, Konta, Jimma, Kambatta and Hadiya, are also said to also practice ensete/coffee farming and "all have a wealth of indigenous agroforestry system" and "in most cases have megalithic sites and sacred sites" (p.98).

Given this widespread combination of megalithic sites, ensete/coffee cultivation and sacred sites, further justification is needed to substantiate the idea that the Gedeo nominated property might be seen as exemplar or representative of the wider region.

ICOMOS would be pleased if more details could be provided to augment the comparative analysis through setting out precisely why the nominated Gedeo area demonstrates this combination of features (megalithic monuments, agroforestry system and sacred sites) better than elsewhere in the rest of the Gedeo area, in the Sidama area, or in south and south-west Ethiopia (when it is readily acknowledged in the nomination dossier that the agro-pastoral system in the nominated area is vulnerable to social and economic changes as are the sacred associations).

**Megalithic monuments**

From the information so far available, there appears to be a lack of clarity on the number and disposition of monument sites in the nominated area and why it is considered that only three of these are 'being nominated'.

Table 3 in the nomination dossier (p.32) shows a list of 104 megalithic sites in the general Gedeo area. The text states that out of these:

*"52 are deemed to be better preserved. Currently, only four are fenced and are under full protection of the regional government. These four megalithic sites are deemed to be most protected based on their representativeness, state of conservation, integrity, abundance of stelae and scientific data that was generated from them during subsequent research. These sites are Tuto-fela, Chelba-tutiti, and Sede-merkato and Sakaro-sodo. Among these megalithic sites, three of them located within the nominated area are presented below."* (p.31)

Of these four, three are shown on the map of the property and described in the nomination dossier – and the justification for inscription states that it is only these three that are 'being nominated'. However, many more sites exist within the nominated area and thus, ipso facto, are being nominated as part of the overall nominated cultural landscape. This means that these need to be described and adequately protected – particularly as the nomination dossier acknowledges that "Gedeo is also reputed for its abundant megalithic archaeological sites. These archaeological sites are located at higher and prominent locations throughout the landscape, following the natural contours and overlooking the surrounding lower areas" (p.7), and "[m]egalithic sites located at the spurs of the hills are one of the main components of the cultural landscape" (p.79).

ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could provide details to show which of the other documented sites set out in Table 3 lies within the nominated area and what are their current protection arrangements. And could details also be provided of other known sites that are awaiting documentation as it is stated in the nomination dossier that "[a]dditional sites await documentation as there was not yet exhaustive survey conducted in area away from main paved road running North to South" (p.29). It would also be helpful to understand what plans are in place for this documentation work to be carried out in the future, and how these sites will be protected until this documentation takes place.

If the nominated areas are to be seen as representative of the wider south and south-west Ethiopia, then it is also necessary to understand how the megalithic sites, within the boundaries, relate to those in the wider Gedeo area and beyond. The nomination dossier mentions abundant sites not only in the Gedeo area but also in the Sidama area and information from other sources suggests that there are some 16 sites surviving in the Sidama area. ICOMOS would be pleased if information could be provided to show how the sites in the nominated area relate to these other sites elsewhere in the Gedeo area, in the Sidama area and in the south and south-west of Ethiopia.

**Justification for the criteria**

The justification for the criteria suggests that "[t]he Gedeo have adopted a megalithic culture in the whole landscape in at least 60 locations (so far documented) dated between the 8th Century AD, and the 14th Century" (p.100), and elsewhere it is stated that: "[i]n addition to the agroforestry, the Gedo has also, since the 8th century, adopted a megalithic culture in which they erected thousands of stelae within their landscape" (p.76). While it is clear that the Gedeo consider the megalithic sites as sacred, what is not so clear is the evidence

that links them to their creation. Other parts of the nomination text appear to suggest that the megalithic sites were related to pastoral societies living in the area. For instance, it states that: “It looks like the Gedeo land was inhabited for a very long time consequently by pastoralists and agriculturalists. The megalithic seems to have been practiced for a long time by the successive socio economies” (p.71).

While it is appreciated that further research is planned, ICOMOS would be pleased to receive clarification as regards precisely what evidence currently exists to support, or otherwise, the involvement of the Gedeo in the construction of megaliths.

**Gedeo cultivation**

It is understood that in the 1920s many Gedeo moved from their ‘ancestral lands’ to more peripheral lands where formerly uncultivated forest begun to be cultivated. This meant that uncultivated lands and sacred forests were much reduced. From the information provided, it is unclear whether the cultivation in the nominated area dates back to the 1920s or earlier, and ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could clarify this issue.

It would also be helpful to understand the pace of change in the nominated area, that is referred to in the nomination dossier, in terms of the scale of new areas that are being brought into cultivation in response to increasing population. Could the State Party provide approximate details for the percentage of land under cultivation now, twenty years ago and a hundred years ago?

**Protection**

ICOMOS would be grateful if more details on protection could be provided in order to gain a clearer understanding of which parts are designated (apart from the archaeological sites which are clear) and what the designations cover.

Which parts are designated under the Federal law for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (2001) that states: “properties which witnesses to the evolution of nature and which has a major value in its scientific, historical, cultural, artistic and handicraft content are protected by law” (p.82)?

Which parts are protected under the Rural Land Administration and Utilization Proclamation No.53/2003 issued by the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State, which underlines that “land for communal use which includes social and cultural affairs and religion is reserved for the communities; and use right equally include the right of “Protecting wild animals, plants, birds, and other natural and artificial resources and heritages, which are harbored under its possession… Further, Article 19 no. 1 ensures the sustainable preservation and use of “lands demarcated for forest, wild life, soil conservation…and historical use…” and the “Right of the local community to share from the benefits gained from protected and preserved areas are reserved (Article 19 no. 3)” (pp.82-83).

How do the above relate to the SNNPRS proclamation of the conservation and protection of the Gedeo Cultural Landscape (once it is implemented)? Could the State Party as well provide updated information as regard the status of the proclamation to protect the Gedeo Cultural Landscape?

Specifically, it is not currently clear how agroforestry uses are protected and in what way. Please, could clarification be provided on whether the traditional processes are protected, or the scope of cultivation, or the type of cultivation? In particular, there is a need to understand whether the proportions of crops are protected i.e. the proportion of ensete and coffee – currently said to be roughly equal. As coffee is a high value crop and ensete grown in the highlands is mainly for local consumption, what protection measures are there to stop coffee cultivation expanding and ensete reducing?

Are there any protection mechanisms that could stop further intensification of cultivation on unsuitable land?

**Management**
The nomination dossier states that management is the "responsibility of the local communities and the Culture and Tourism offices at the district/Woreda, Zonal and regional levels with periodic follow-ups by the Federal Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritages (ARCCH)" (p.83).

Although it is good that the management system is underpinned by local elders and ritual leaders, and the Ballee and Songo systems that "enact different rules and regulations that dictate human interaction with the environment" (p.85), the overall system appears to be fragile in terms of how it can deal with modern threats and how it might strengthen resilience – without which it is unclear how the cultural landscape will survive in the long term or even the medium term.

It appears that staff will only be engaged at the archaeological sites and that "for the agricultural landscape, the whole community will be in charge, using the traditionally acquired skills and there will be no need to hire additional people" (p.86). And in the future, there are plans to "upgrade the qualification of the heritage protection experts in Gedeo zonal Culture and Tourism office. . ." (p.86). However, heritage expertise alone is not enough. ICOMOS would be pleased if further details could be provided of where the expertise lies that is needed to advise on the implications of any changes to the current agroforestry practices – given the social threats that are acknowledged.

The nomination dossier acknowledges that:

"*The Gedeo farmers are at the base of this economic drive, producing this cash crop [coffee]. The population in Gedeo is in an alarming rate of increase. The land holding capacity is decreasing at a rate of about 20% in less than a generation. The economic condition of the region and its dependence on coffee could not sustain itself without a sustainable land use plan which takes the population growth into consideration. The traditional lands, including the ritual forests are also threatened by this impact. Currently, hilly lands that reach more than 70% inclination are under heavy enset cultivation. The land Vs population imbalance is a major threat that will impact, in the near future the integrity and OUV of the agricultural scape*." (p.89)

And: *"It seems that the landscape is reaching beyond its carrying capacity and that will eventually leads environmental degradation if proper conservation and livelihood measures are not taking place."* [emphasis added] (p.78)

Both the expansion of population, which is encouraging the cultivation of unsuitable land to beyond the carrying capacity of the landscape, and the migration of young people away from the area, appear to cut across the continuation of traditional practices. From the information provided, it does not appear that the "proper conservation and livelihood measures" and the "sustainable land-use plan" that are mentioned above are in place. Please, could the State Party provide information in relation to whether these measures are being planned?

It would also be helpful to understand where the Gedeo Development Association and the Sustainable Land Management office (SLM) fit into the management structure.

**Documentation**
There is little mention of documentation in the nomination dossier. If traditional practices, traditional knowledge and belief systems, and traditional tree species are to be protected, there is clearly an urgent need to document all of these, through communal participation in the face of the very real threats that have been highlighted.

Could information please be provided on how cultural knowledge systems, beliefs and norms are being documented in relation to sacred forests, megalithic sites and agroforestry practices?

ICOMOS appreciates that the timeframe for providing this additional information is short. Brief responses are required at this stage, and can be discussed further with the State Party if needed during the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel process.

We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation process.

We would be grateful if you could provide **ICOMOS** and the **UNESCO World Heritage Centre** with the above information by **Friday 12 November 2021 at the latest.**

Please note that the State Party shall submit copies of the additional information to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and to ICOMOS so that it can be formally registered as part of the nomination dossier.

We thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

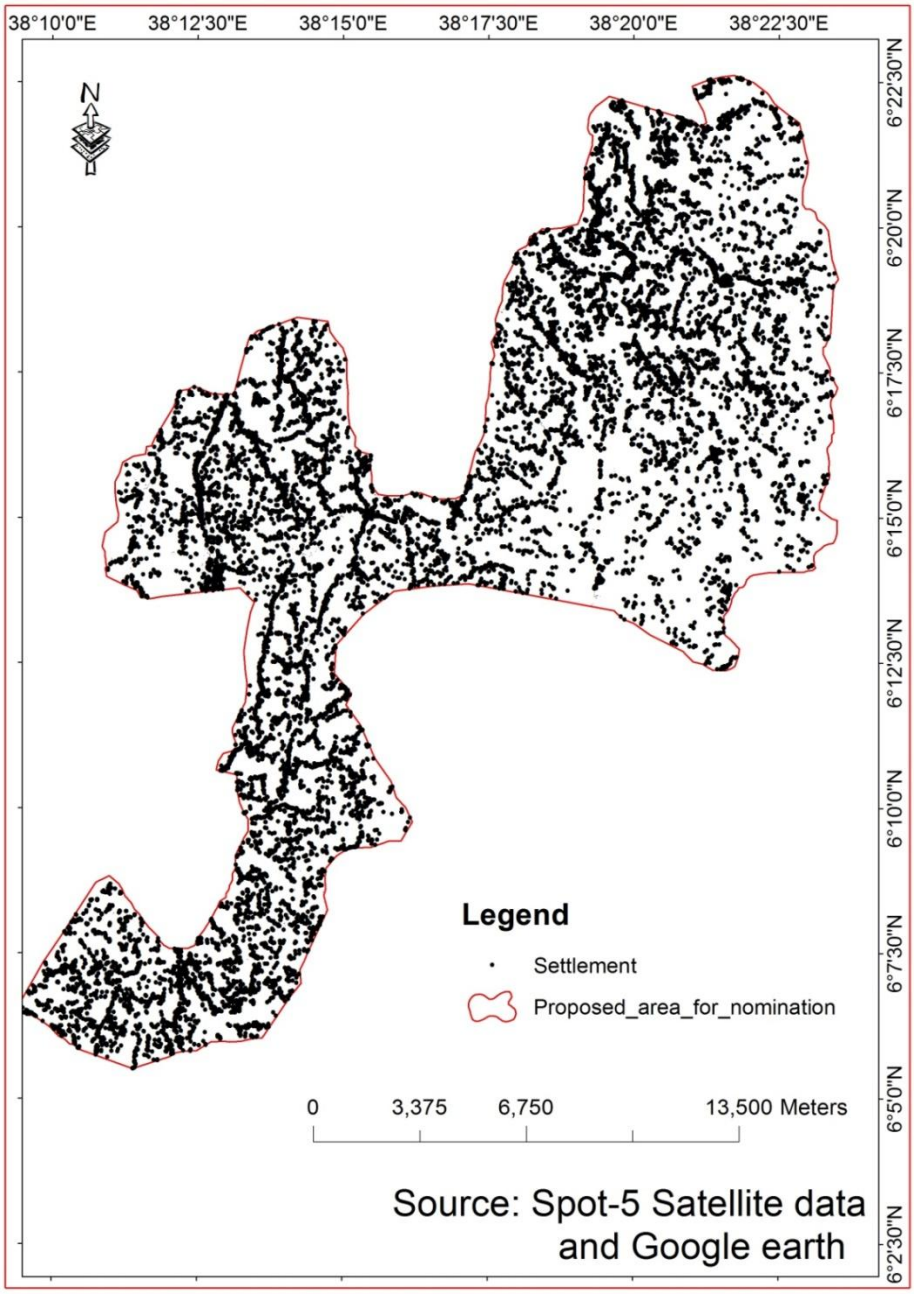
Yours faithfully,

Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

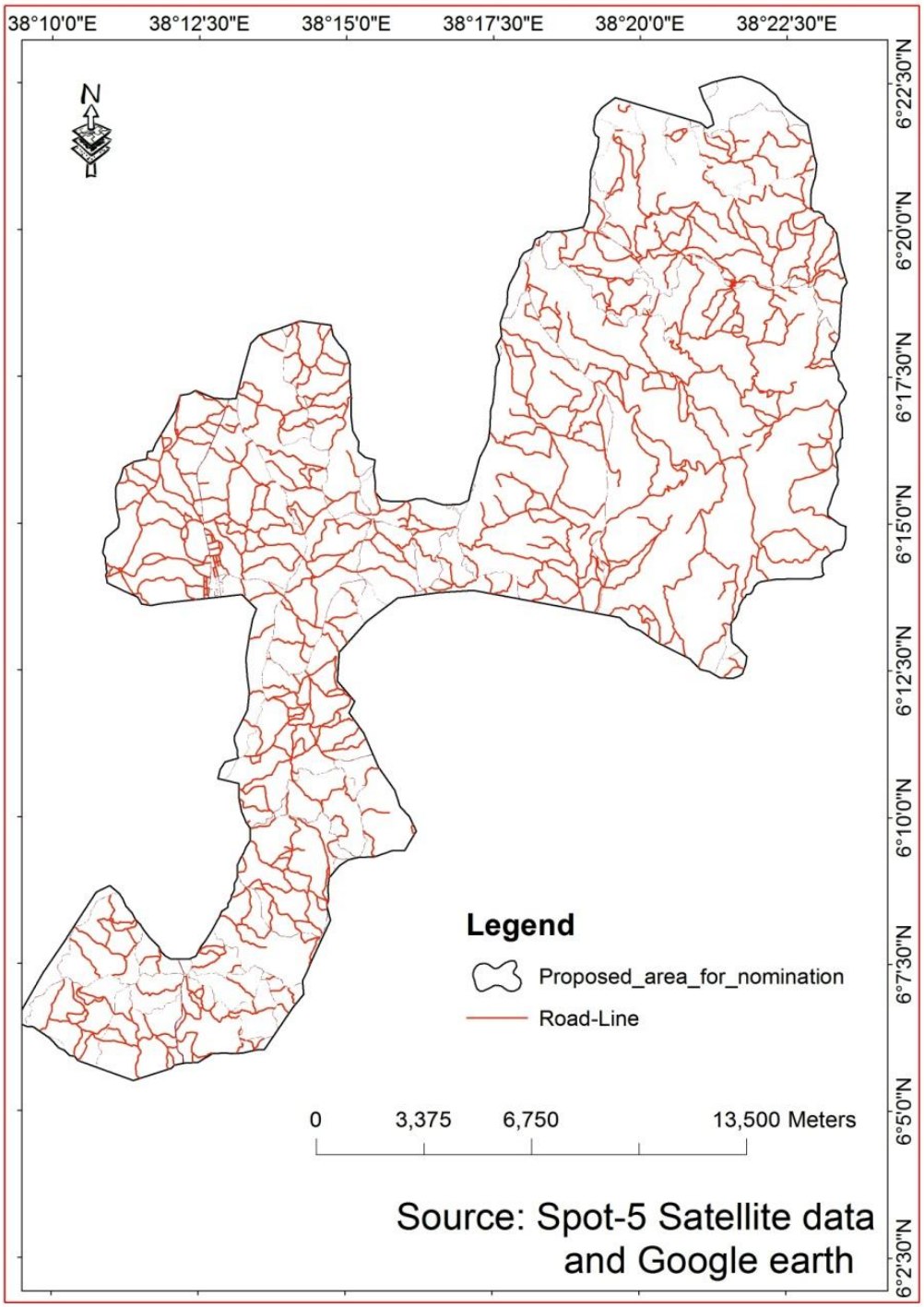
Copy to Gedeo Zone Administration Culture, Tourism and Sport Department
The Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural heritage
Association for the Conservation of Culture
UNESCO World Heritage Centre

## 1. Maps

The disposition of settlements within the nominated property and the line of roads are presented below in two maps.



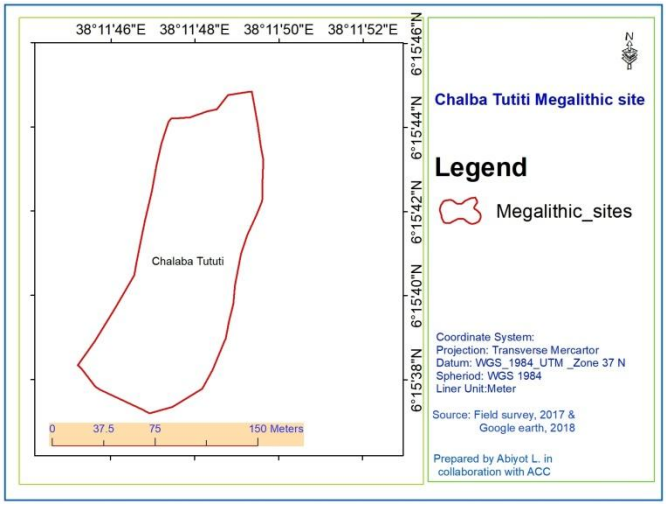

Map showing settlement within the nominated property.

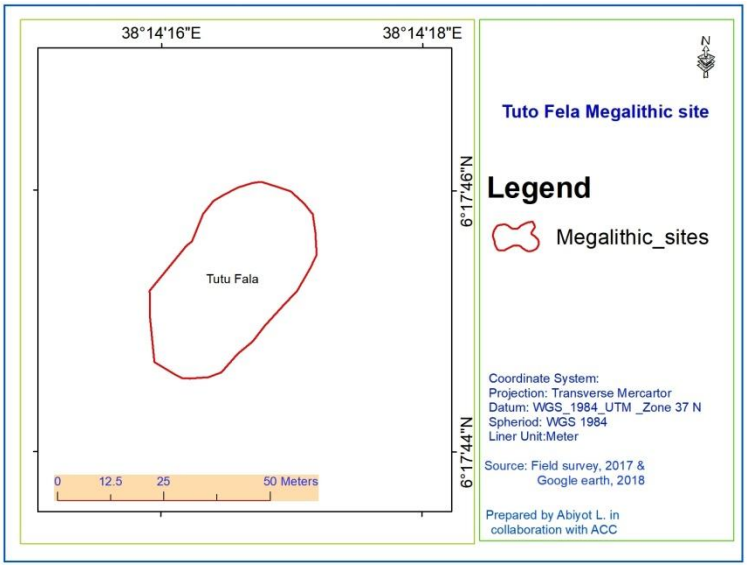


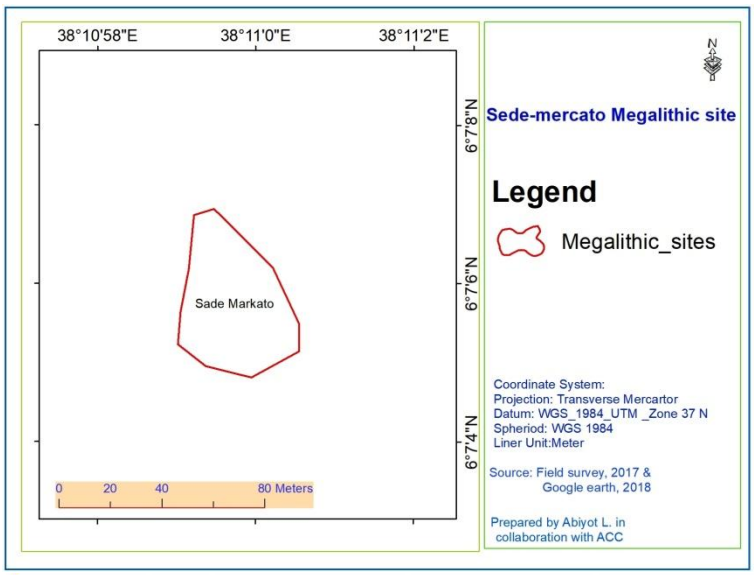

Roads and foot paths connecting settlements within the nominated property

**Delineation of megalithic sites**

Below are maps of the proposed megalithic and rock art sites within the proposed area: (Note that as the size of the megalithic and rock sites is small, it was not possible to show the boundary of the site in one map. The sites look a point on 1:25,000 map. Thus, we have produced the precise boundary of each site and we have also provided the latitude and longitude values of tips of the boundary of the sites below.





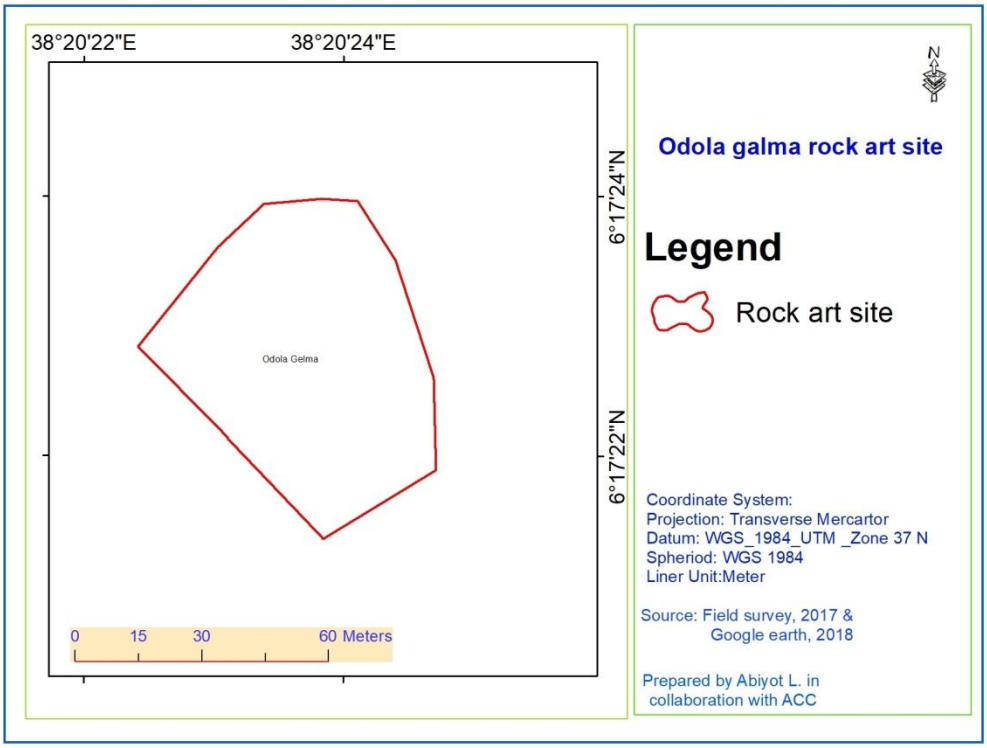



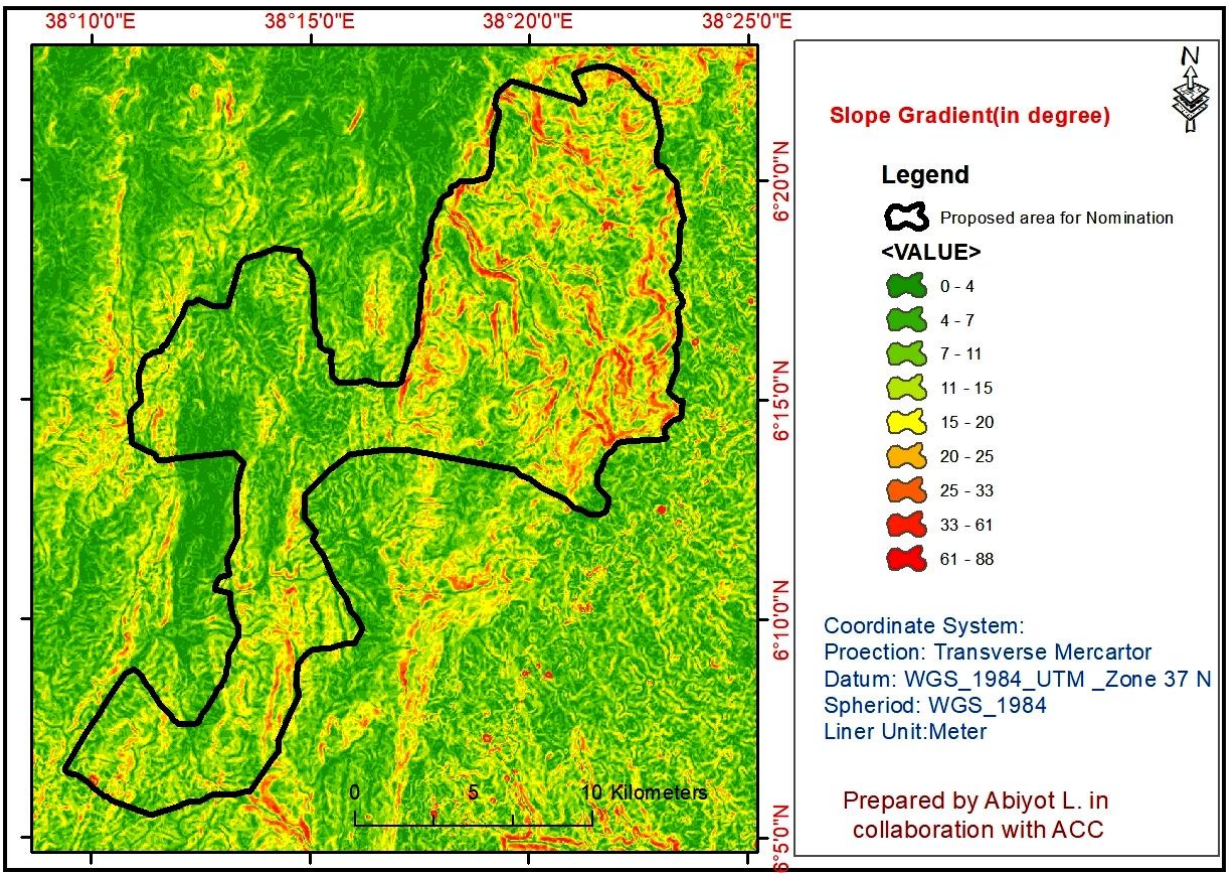

Table : Grid references of boundaries of megalithic and rock art sites proposed for nomination

| Site name | West tip | North tip | East tip | South tip | South East tip | South West tip |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Odola Galama | 38°20'22.497"E 6°17'24.917"N | 38°20'24.202"E 6°17'26.037"N | 38°20'24.811"E 6°17'24.699"N | 38°20'23.95"E 6°17'23.439"N | 38°20'24.803"E 6°17'23.96"N | |
| Sede Markato | 38°10'59.237"E 6°7'7.895"N | 38°10'59.623"E 6°7'8.953"N | 38°11'0.382"E 6°7'8.216"N | 38°11'0.102"E 6°7'6.834"N | 38°11'0.703"E 6°7'7.175"N | 38°10'59.16"E 6°7'7.251"N |
| Tuto-fela | 38°14'15.969"E 6°17'45.231"N | 38°14'16.83"E 6°17'46.066"N | 38°14'17.253"E 6°17'45.51"N | 38°14'16.218"E 6°17'44.562"N | 38°14'16.007"E 6°17'44.675"N | |
| Chalba tutti | 38°11'46.934"E 6°15'41.977"N | 38°11'49.426"E 6°15'44.842"N | 38°11'49.689"E 6°15'42.257"N | 38°11'46.993"E 6°15'37.169"N | 38°11'48.301"E 6°15'37.809"N | 38°11'45.286"E 6°15'38.356"N |

## 2. Comparative analysis

The Gedeo cultural landscape shows attributes that are not present in other cultural landscapes in the South and South western regions of the country. One of the attribute that makes the landscape exceptional is its human carry capacity. The landscape has the capacity to sustain large number of population in small plot of land. Research reports have indicated that the population density of the landscape is estimated to be 1300 persons/km$^2$(Bogale, 2007; Mesele, 2007), which is beyond the national population density (72 persons /km$^2$ ) (Kidanu et al., 2009). The slope map that we generated also revealed that almost all parts of the nominated area are settled by large number of population and with high road density.

The other important attribute that makes the landscape unique is the culturally practiced land management system that enabled the communities to meticulously harness the resources in their localities despite rapid population growth and highly rugged topography. The proposed nominated area stands out from the other parts of the Gedeo due to its clear manifestation of human adaptation to environmental challenges. As it can be seen from the slope map, the slope gradient of the landscape is beyond 70% in some places, with high ruggedness which makes conventional cultivation very difficult. Nonetheless, the communities are sustainably cultivating such very rugged landscape through employing their age-old traditional knowledge of land management. This is one of the attributes that makes the landscape exceptional.




Map showing the slope gradient of the nominated area

Moreover, the presence of ancient megalithic and rock art traditions and the traditional rituals and veneration of the ancestors, which are still alive and sometimes practiced within the nominated area, are among important attributes that makes the nominated area exceptional. The proposed megalithic and rock art sites of the Gedeo cultural landscape have the following qualities as compared to the other sites in the south and South West Ethiopia.

- The proposed megalithic sites in Gedeo contain a large number of steles (at Tuto-fela about 400, Sede-markato 665 and Tutiti 1530). None of the sites elsewhere in Ethiopia show such abundance, including in Sidama .

- In almost all South Ethiopian sites (except in Tiya and Gurage), the stelae are phallic. The Gedeo megalithic sites, such as in Tuto-fela, include both phallic and Anthropomorphic steles which is believed to give the Gedeo sites additional layer of archaeological and cultural value.

- The proposed megalithic sites are relatively better protected compared to the other sites in the larger southern and south west region, including in Gedeo. Most of the southern Ethiopian sites are found in a precarious condition; in that many of them are fallen down or destroyed due to human and natural factors. Some are found in private farm lands or residential compounds. In some of the Gedeo sites, for example at Jemjemo, the stelae have been reshaped and reused for local makeshift bridges and objects for traditional games. In the same instance, at Bukisa, some stelae have been taken to a school compound and used as part of the school fence. At another site, in Michile the stelae have under-went a tragic total destruction. Local road construction projects devastated lots of steles in several sites in Kochere district.

- Except for the Tiya site further north, none of the south Ethiopian sites have been studied in detail. Archaeological studies in Gedeo succeeded in discovering important archaeological materials which led to the understanding of site functions. Further archaeological researches was conducted recently in Tutiti by and elsewhere by Andrew I. Duff and colleagues have also brought to light knowledge about the site function. Various papers and three M.A. theses were conducted on the Gedeo megalithic sites. Survey and comparative study of the Gedeo steles were undertaken by local scholars and multiple reports were compiled by the federal, regional and zonal culture offices. Dozens of scientific papers have been published.

- At the exception of the Tiya and some Sidama steles, most of the South Ethiopian stelae sites show simple phallic steles devoid of any engravings / marks on them. The Gedeo steles are characterized by diverse engravings on which people tried to communicate their feelings. These have been presented in the aforementioned publications. In spite of the fact that these enfravings are subject for interpretations, there is no doubt that they are of high scientific and symbolic interest.

- The Gedeo megalithic sites occupy important place in the spiritual life of the people. In spite of challenges and pressure from some powerful religious institutions, some people continued to

practice rituals on these sites. For example, at the site of Tuto-fela, the family of the late Kechara, patron of the site, performs rituals during each harvesting season. Members conduct prayers, serve coffee and grains where as an elder in the family give blessings; wishing health, peace, productivity and fertility to his people, animals and the land. They regard the stele sites as tombs of their forefathers and communicate with their ancestors through them.

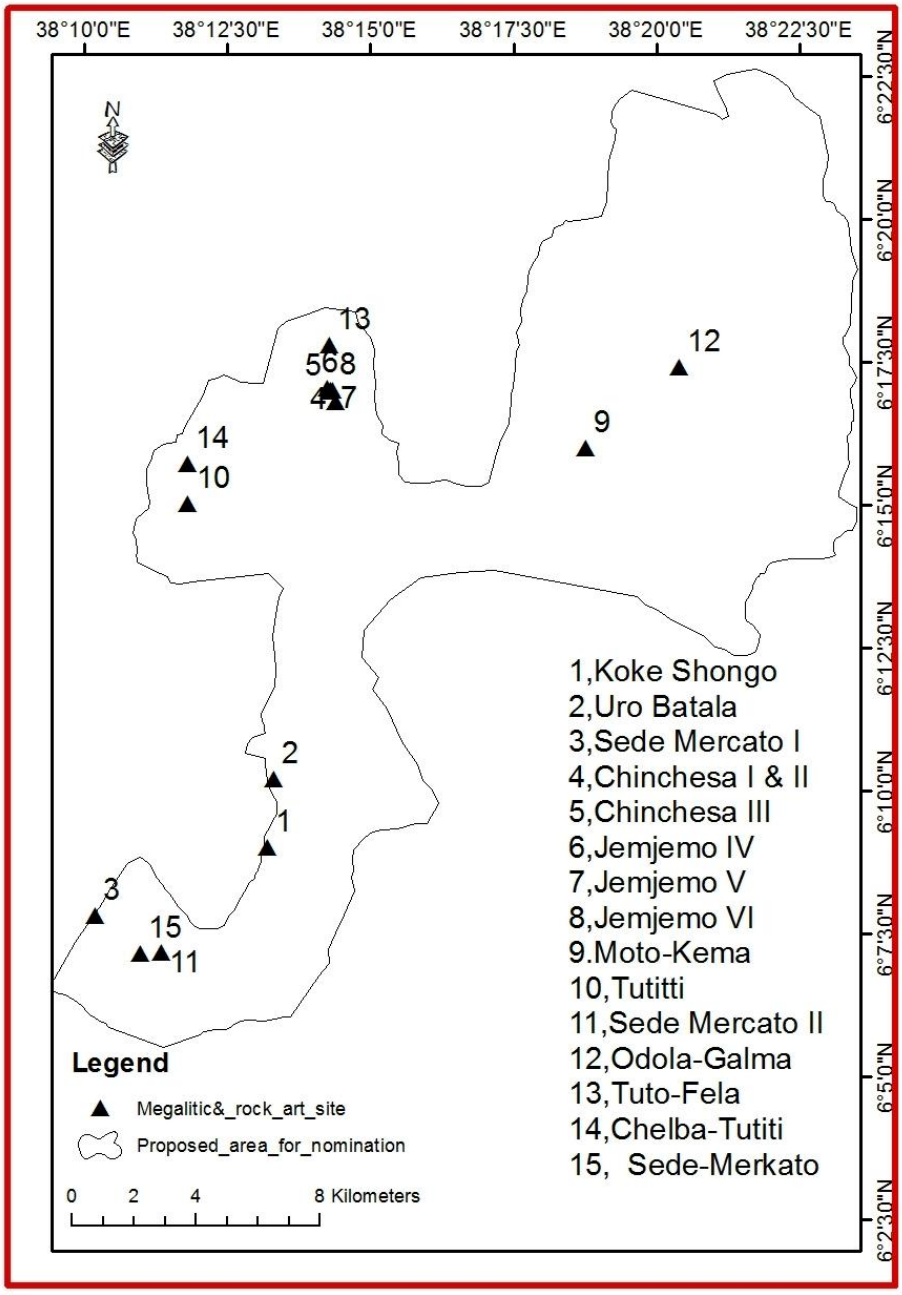
In addition to the megalithic sites, the Galma rock art site also serves as a sacred site. The water spring that runs between the two rock art panels is considered as sacred water which has a purifying power. It is used to purify those who committed taboo and secluded by the society. According to Gedeo people oral story, this practice has been inherited from their ancestors of the distant past.

### 3. Megalithic monuments and Boundaries

The total numbers of megalithic and rock art sites that have been documented so far are 52, not 104. Among the 52, only 15 of them are located within the proposed nominated area. Except the ones proposed for nomination, majority of the sites which are within the proposed nominated area are not in good status. Most of them are located in farmlands, school compounds, and in the market areas. Regarding their current state of conservation, most of them are fallen; some still standing, some of them are buried in the ground.

As stated in the Nomination Dossier and the Management Plan, the Zonal and Regional Culture and Tourism Offices along with Dilla University have a plan to embark on an intensive survey, inventory and documentation. Based on the mentioned activities, protection and conservation of the sites is proposed to be carried out in joint venture.

The responsibility for the protection of the unfenced sites that are within the nominated area is currently given to the regional and zonal bureau of culture and tourism. There is plan by the regional and zonal Culture and Tourism Bureau and Office to conduct the survey in areas further away from the main road to document and protect the already known sites and new sites to be discovered. The result that will be generated from the above undertakings will be used to systematically document and protect the properties. We note here that it will not be easy to access the whole area within a short period. So multiyear efforts are expected to fully understand and document the totality of the megalithic sites in the nominated area and beyond.




Map showing the distribution of megalithic monuments within the nominated area.

Table detailing brief description megalithic sites that are within the nominated area

| Sno | SITE NAME | Coordinates | | Elevation | Woreda | Kebele | Stelae type | | | Amount of stelae | Site dimension | Orientation | Number of stelae | | | | Visible tumulus or cairn |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | E | | | | anthropo | phallic | basaltic | | | | intact and erected | base erected | fallen | fragments | |
| 1 | Koke Shongo | N 06° 08.748' | E 38° 13.212' | 2056 m | Yirga Chefe | Koke | | x | | 20 | 90 m | E/N | | | 7 | 15 | |
| 2 | Uro Batala | N 06° 10.108' | E 38° 13.320' | 2068 m | Yirga Chefe | Uro Batala | | x | | 52 | 55 x 20 m | E/W | 1 | 19 | 20 | 12 | |
| 3 | Sede Mercato I | N 06° 07‘ 06.0‘‘ | E 38° 10‘ 59.8‘‘ | 2181 m | Yirga Chefe | Sede | x | x | x | 470 | 35 x 30 m | N/S | 48 | 214 | | | x |
| 4 | Chinchesa I & II | N 06° 17‘06.3‘‘ | E 38° 14‘18.7‘‘ | 1991 m | Wonago | Jemjemo | | x | | 23 | | | | | 5 | 18 | |
| 5 | Chinchesa III | N 06° 17‘06.0‘‘ | E 38° 14‘14.9‘‘ | 1990 m | Wonago | Jemjemo | | x | | 64 | | | 7 | | 20 | 37 | |
| 6 | Jemjemo IV | N 06° 17‘04.7‘‘ | E 38° 14‘21.6‘‘ | 2001 m | Wonago | Jemjemo | | x | | 12 | | | 8 | | | 4 | |
| 7 | Jemjemo V | N 06° 17‘03.8‘‘ | E 38° 14‘18.6‘‘ | 1996 m | Wonago | Jemjemo | | x | | 8 | | | | | 8 | | |
| 8 | Jemjemo VI | N 06° 17‘01.4‘‘ | E 38° 14‘19.8‘‘ | 1988 m | Wonago | Jemjemo | | x | | 12 | | | | | 12 | | |
| 9 | Moto-Kema | N 06° 16' 47" | E 38° 18' 49" | 1970 m | Yirga Chefe | | | x | | 48 | 45 x 30 m | N/S | | | | | |
| 10 | Tutitti | N 06° 15' 43" | E 38° 11' 20" | 1900 m | Yirga Chefe | | | x | | 248 | 150 x 100 m | S.W/N.E | | | | | |
| 11 | Sede Mercato II | N 06° 07‘09.9‘‘ | E 38° 11‘21.2‘‘ | 2131 m | Yirga Chefe | Sede | | x | | 11 | | | | | 10 | 1 | |
| 12 | Odola-Galma rock art | Proposed for nomination | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | Tuto Fela | Proposed for nomination | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Chelba-Tutitti | Proposed for nomination | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | Sede-Merkato | Proposed for nomination | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Regarding the question raised in relation to representativeness, the nominated area cannot be considered as representative of others south and south-western megalithic areas of Ethiopia as each region have its own typo-morphological specificities, chronologies, and functions.

The phallic stelae widely spread from Sidama to Oromo Guji show a long process of territorial management The phallic stelae sites are not unique to Gedeo area, but the presence of phallic stelae at Chelba-Tutitti which counts to more than a thousand of monuments makes the site, is unique. The presence of anthropomorphic stelae reshaped from the phallic ones and used as grave markers on cairns also adds to the uniqueness of the site ot Tuto-fela. These sites date from 11$^{th}$ to 16$^{th}$ century but are still not well known due to the disappearing of the stelae most probably stolen by the traffic of ancient African art, and due to the different form that the cairn cemetery can take: few graves in circle versus hundreds in accretion.

Gedeo people, through their own ancestor worship conception and traditional beliefs keep and protect these monuments as if they were their own. People sometimes worship a place because they settled there and the land feeds them. Traditional leaders protect them by making the area as their songo (sacred place), some women are still coming to pray and put butter on the stelae.

The megalithic monuments which abound the Gedeo are also significantly present in Sidama. However, they are more abundant and better conserved in Gedeo.

The proposed megalithic sites in Gedeo contain a large number of steles (at Tuto-fela about 400, Sede-markato 665 and Tutiti 1530). None of the sites elsewhere in Ethiopia show such abundance, including in Sidama.

## 4. Justification for the criteria

With regard to our current knowledge, no one could definitely answer as to who constructed the megalithic monuments. However, current traditional practices suggest the strong material and intangible heritage connections. The Gedeo megalithic site occupies an important place in the spiritual life of the people. In spite of challenges and pressure from some powerful religious and political institutions, some people continued to practice rituals on these sites. For example, at the site of Tuto fela, the family of the late Kechara, patron of the site, performs rituals during each harvesting season. Members conduct prayers, serve coffee and grains where as an elder in the family give blessings; wishing health, peace, productivity and fertility to his people, animals and the land. They regard the stele sites as tombs of their forefathers and communicate with their ancestors through them.

In addition to the megalithic sites, the Galma rock art site also serves as a sacred site. The water that runs between the two rock art panels is considered as sacred in that it has a purifying significance. It purifies those who committed taboo and secluded by the society. According to Gedeo people, this practice is inherited from their ancestors.

## 5. Gedeo cultivation

The Gedeo are not unique in their enset cultivation culture when compared with the other neighboring ethnic groups and those which inhabits south western Ethiopia. However, Gedeo stands out in its traditional agroforestry system which combine enset with coffee cultivation and protection of indigenous trees supported by ritual, and traditional system. We think in the long run the protection and use of enset elsewhere (Outside of Gedeo) could be enhanced once this agroforestry is recognized globally.

It is difficult to trace as to when the cultivation of Enset and coffee begun in Gedeo. However, it is certain that the cultivation of enset and coffee was practiced in Gedeo prior to 1920's. In the 1920's there was a movement of local people from midland to lowland areas driven by the then central government's interest to expand coffee farm.

Currently, there is drive/preference toward agroforestry based cultivation in the lowland areas which is located to the east of the nominated property. This shift towards agroforestry is mainly driven by population pressure and the need to maximize productivity and economic gain; as coffee as an agroforestry products sell for higher prices in the market compared to cereals.

According to the data obtained from analysis of Landsat image of 2020, **89.78%** of nominated area is covered by agroforestry, which include coffee-enset cultivation, indigenous trees, and home gardens while the remaining 10.2% is covered with settlement/built-up area. The total area covered by forest is estimated to be 31.2 hectares, which makes up 0.001% of the nominated area. The proportion of agroforestry in 2002 was estimated to be 89.7% while settlement/ built-up area accounting for 10.18%. The coverage of forest land was estimated to be 0.002% of the nominated area.

Unfortunately, there is no data to indicate the land use/cover proportion of agroforestry and forest 100 years ago. However, based on elder's comments, it can be said that the proportion of forest cover during that period was much greater than the current coverage.

## 6. Protection

As it is clearly stated in the proclamation for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (209/2001) all cultural properties in the country, which witnesses to the evolution of nature and which has a major value in its scientific, historical, cultural, artistic and handicraft content are protected. Hence, the proclamation is a general law for the conservation and protection of all cultural heritages in the country. It stands for all cultural properties of the country.

In addition to the Federal proclamation, the South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) has endorsed its own proclamation to the effects of the conservation and protection of the Gedeo Cultural Landscape. This means, in addition to the general laws, additional proclamation is issued, which is specific to the Gedeo Cultural Landscape. This proclamation is solely used to insure the conservation and protection of Gedeo cultural landscape. This proclamation has already been endorsed by the regional government and effective as of its endorsement.

The above proclamations are to be implemented along with other proclamations such as the Rural Land Administration and Utilization Proclamation No.53/2003 of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State. This proclamation is meant to utilize and conserve the land in the region in sustainable manner. The proclamation applies to Gedeo. The Proclamation for the Conservation of the Gedeo Cultural Landscape 189/2021 concurs with the already existing Rural Land Administration and Utilization Proclamation. It further strengthens the sustainable conservation and protection of the Cultural Landscape.

Issues related to protection of traditional process and practices are well addressed in the Management Plan. We believe that the rituals, belief system and traditional practices are the backbone of sustainability of the landscape, thus utmost attention is given to maintain the traditional practices.

Regarding the proportion of coffee with enset, we believe that there are variations between the different agro-ecologies. As it is presented in the nomination file and management plan, enset and coffee are the major components of the agroforestry system with different proportions in different agro-ecological regions. For instance, the highland region is dominated by enset with less or no coffee (at elevation >2300 masl), while in the mid altitude (1500-2300 masl) coffee and enset are equally present. On the other hand coffee, enset and fruits are given equal attention in the lower altitudes. This implies that the proportion of coffee and enset in the agroforestry system is not uniform in different agro-ecological regions.

However, there is an age-old traditional practice of growing enset along with coffee which is believed to maintain the proportion between coffee and enset. Through their traditional practices, the communities are accustomed to growing coffee along with enset cognizant of the mutual co-existence between coffee and enset. Except in a highland areas where coffee doesn't grow, in most of the areas coffee grows with enset but the proportion varies depending on agroecology. Thus, the expansion of coffee farm doesn't necessarily lead to a reduction in enset as both tend to grow together. Rather expansion of coffee farm concomitantly leads to the plantation of more enset.

Regarding the protection mechanism planned to stop further intensification on unsuitable land, we can say that the fact that land is very scarce in Gedeo hinders further intensification of cultivation on unsuitable land. Cultivation on unsuitable land, particularly steep slope is very common in Gedeo due to shortage of land. As it can be seen from the maps we provided, most parts of the nominated area are rugged and steeply inclined. However, this has been under cultivation and supporting large number of population. Under normal circumstance, most part of the landscape is not suitable for conventional agriculture. However, the Gedeo people managed to make it suitable for cultivation through their age-old traditional practices. This practice is believed to enable the communities to meticulously harness the resources in their locality without significant damages to their environment. Therefore, as majority of the cultivation is being carried out on a rugged and steep slope with indigenous conservation in place, it is suggested that any further expansion to marginal land will be based on the principle of production with conservation. An expansion of agroforestry land use to the lower elevation through an indigenous practice known as 'Urane' is a typical example of production with conservation in place. Furthermore, in order to ease the pressure on land, livelihood diversification activities and measures in relation halting the rapid population growth are proposed to be implemented by respective offices.

## *7.* Management

As it is clearly articulated in the Management Plan, the Gedeo cultural landscape has been sustained through the strenuous efforts of the local people and ritual leaders who enabled the traditional institutions to be the custodian of the landscape. Equally important is the role to be played by the various government institutions that are mandated to protect and conserve the cultural landscape. These institutions already played important roles in improving the livelihood of the communities. In this regard, the Zonal Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Department has been engaged in the management of the agroforestry system through its Conservation – livelihood programs such as SLMP (Sustainable land management program), CALMP for R (Climate Action for Land Management Program for Result), PSNP (Productive Safety Net Program) and IWMP (Integrated watershed management Program). These programs have been implemented by team of experts that functions at various administrative levels such as Zonal, District and Kebele. These experts are in charge of the implementation of the programs which include: monitoring conservation and management of the agroforestry system and provision of technical supports to the local people. Most importantly, there is the "Agricultural and Natural resource management Office", which is established at the lowest administrative level (Kebele) with the intention of providing the necessary support to the community. This office consists of development agents that work in three different areas which include (1) natural resource management, (2) Crop Cultivation service (3) Livestock Production service. The main duties and responsibilities of the development agents are to ensure the proper implementation of the various conservation and livelihood improvement programs, identifying pertinent socio-economic, demographic and environmental problems that the local communities face, and provide technical support for the communities. Therefore, unlike the megalithic monuments that seek a recruitment of heritage experts or upgrading of the already existing ones, the agroforestry enjoys the already established systems which will undoubtedly need a more concerted action and focus.

In the nomination dossier and management plan, it is indicated that the landscape has been threatened by multiple socio-economic, demographic and environmental challenges. In order to address these challenges the government has designed and implemented various conservation – livelihood approach based strategies such as SLMP (Sustainable land management program), CALMP for R (Climate Action for Land Management Program for Result), HABP(Household asset Building program), PSNP(Productive safety Net Program) and IWMP(Integrated watershed management Program). These programs focus on conservation of the agroforestry system and improving the livelihood of the communities (Source: Gedeo Zone Agriculture Natural Resource Management Department).

SLMP used to be implemented in various parts of the Gedeo zone; however, currently it is implemented in only one district. A more holistic program known as CALMP for R is now in place and being implemented in four districts of the zone namely, Dilla Zuria, Wonago, Yirgachefe and Kochore. In this program the local people are organized into Watershed Development Cooperative Association (WDCA) and have access to financial support through loan and subsidy. The association is mandated to prepare action plan based on pertinent environmental and socio-economic problems being manifested in their locality.

In addition to the government efforts, Gedeo Development association, a local NGO, which was established in 1993 has been rendering different social and economic services for the local people. The primary objective of the association is to improve the living condition of the local people focusing on development areas which are not addressed by the government.

## 8. Documentation

With regard to cultural knowledge systems, beliefs and norms that are being documented in relation to sacred forests, the following were actively engaged in the activity: Megalithic sites and agroforestry practices documentations were conducted by ARCCH (Authority for research and conservation of cultural Heritage), ACC (Association for conservation of Culture), and by a French archeologist. In this regard, extensive documentations of the megalithic monuments were done by Roger Joussaume who has also published a book entitled Turo Fela et les steless du sud de l'Ethiopie. The documentation and publications of the megalithic monuments by Francis Anfray are worth mention. An inventory of the Megalithic monuments was also carried out by Anne Lise Goujon. ACC has also produced a baseline data that show the distribution, nature, challenges and conservation strategies of the sacred forests in collaboration with Dilla University. The documentary film of Alain Tixier, entitled, Ethiopia: le mystere des megalithes, that was channeled through ARTE, a Franco - German TV channel another important documentation works done so far.

In addition, the Gedeo administration in collaboration with Walta Information Center had also documented the Gedeo Baallee System and Jilaa, Gedeo traditional birth celebration. Furthermore, Abebe Mengistu and Habtamu Tesfaye (2012) conducted extensive inventory in four districts in Gedeo Zone. According to their report, about 60 sites are recorded in Gedeo.

On the other hand, Dilla University, along with Gedeo Zone Culture and Tourism Department has embarked on rehabilitation and improvements of different flora and fauna in order to safeguard indigenous species and disseminate the same to the community from their nursery sites in Dilla and Yirgachaffe. So far, about 16 enset species have been identified and being expanded among the community. There are also more than six local coffee varieties and many indigenous medicinal plants and indigenous tree species in the nursery sites to be disseminate to the community to enhance biodiversity conservation.

Finally, there is a plan to publish a comprehensive book about Gedeo people; this work is under its final stage of publication. It is also planned to carry out further inventory of sacred sites, megalithic and the intangible aspects of the people along with Dilla University, ARCCH and Bureau of Culture and Tourism.

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Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ministry of Culture &Tourism
Authority for Research & Conservation of
Cultural Heritage

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Date: 12 2 FEB. 2022

Gwenaelle Bourdin

Director

ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Subject: Additional Information on "The Gedeo Cultural Landscape"

Dear Gwenaelle Bourdin

In reference to your letter GB/AS/EG1641/IR dated on 20 December 2021, we have received the interim report and additional information request on matters related to agroforestry practices, documentation, sustainable land use plan and megalithic monuments of 'The Gedeo Cultural Landscape. '

Therefore, based on your request, I hereby enclose a document of 18 pages with additional information which will help you to have clear information about the Nomination Dossier and facilitate the evaluation process.

Yours Faithfully

Alebaw Tayalew
Director General

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ministry of Culture & Tourism
Authority for Research & Conservation of Cultural Heritage

Cc:

- Permanent Delegation of Ethiopia to UNESCO
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre
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## Agroforestry practices

The Gedeo agroforestry system strikes a balance between environmental conservation and subsistence farming under a rural population pressure. It rests between the reciprocal optimization of production and protection. It is also a multi-story and multi-purpose land-use system (Kanshie, 2002; SLUF, 2006).

In terms of agro-biodiversity, it is very rich and characterized by high agro-biodiversity. It is mainly composed of enset, coffee, indigenous trees, herbs, fruits, root crops and cereals, which constitute the major portion of agro-biodiversity. Its richness in agro-biodiversity on the other hand is a key to ensuring food security of the local people.

The followings are some of the attributes that makes the Gedeo agroforestry system unique.

- **Its resilience despite increasing population and economic pressures**

Although there is an increasing population and economic pressure, the Gedeo landscape is relatively better conserved compared to other agroforestry system in South Ethiopia such as the Sidama, which is undergoing a significant change. Research reports have already indicated that the Sidama agroforestry has been experiencing an increasingly significant shift towards economically lucrative cash and woody trees such as eucalyptus (*Eucalypetus camaldulensis), Khatha edulis* and *pineapple* and is having its toll on traditional agroforestry and native woody trees (Mellisse et al., 2018; Doda, 2014; Abebe, Wiersum & Bongers, 2010). This is not the case in Gedeo. Population pressure as a challenge is not a recent phenomena in Gedeo; it was mentioned as one factor for the down slope expansion of the Gedeo to the formerly uninhabited zone in early 20$^{th}$ C (McClellan, 1988).

Population pressure in Gedeo is much greater than its neighboring Sidama and other agroforestry system in the Southern Ethiopia. Household level farm size is shrinking through time due to land sharing culture within a family and consequently the amount of crop harvested from a shrinking and fragmented plot land is gradually declining. Despite such challenges, and unlike the Sidama, the Gedeo resisted the introduction of mono-crops such as Kchat, eucalyptus and pineapple which could have provided them with fast economic return as compared to enset and coffee.

Mellisse et al., (2018) studied home garden dynamics of home gardens in Sidama and Gedeo for over two-decades (1991–2013) based on a survey of 240 farm households and focus group discussions. Their findings indicated that the Sidama homegarden has been undergoing significant shift from Enset oriented systems to Khat-based. The overall trend in cropping patterns in Sidama indicated a shift from food to cash crop production over time, while in Gedeo food crop values remained unaltered. In sidama, khat cultivation coverage increased from 5% in 1991 to 35% in 2013; while enset-coffee based farm declining from 45% in 1991 to 25% in 2013. According to their findings there was no change in values in Gedeo (Mellisse et al., 2018). Similarly the study conducted by Abebe, Wiersum & Bongers (2010) reported the gradual replacement of enset by maize and coffee by more financially attractive cash crops such as khat and pineapple in Sidama.

The farming system pursued by Gedeo is markedly different from the Gurage where, enset is grown mostly in a row and in Hadiya along with wheat and barley. In Gedeo, it is grown along with coffee and indigenous trees (Kanshie, 2002). The Gedeo intentionally grow enset along with coffee under the shade of indigenous trees. According to Gedeo farmers, growing enset together with coffee has both ecological and economic advantages because enset has the capacity to hold much water for longer period of time in its sheath; thus it serves as source of water for coffee plant. When harvested, the leaf and other parts of enset serve as compost and thus, improve soil fertility. Through its leaf, enset protect coffee from sunshine. Beside its ecological values, the Gedeo farmers have a good understanding about its role in ensuring food security. Its cultural importance is beyond imagination for the Gedeo as described by Kanshie (2002). That is why the Gedeo are able to sustain their practice of growing enset along with coffee in the face of increasing population and economic pressures. This makes the Gedeo agroforestry system to stand out.

- **Its contribution to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation**

Studies indicated that the Gedeo agroforestry system is known for its *circa situm* biodiversity conservation (Negash, Yirdaw & Luukkanen, 2011; Asfaw, 2009; Kanshie, 2002). It represents relatively a high degree of compositional, structural, and functional diversity as compared to other agroforestry systems in the country. Owing to high plant diversity, some claim that the agroforestry resembles moist afromontane forest (Seta, 2019) while others characterizing it as agroforest (Kanshie, 2002; Abebe, 2013).

Available empirical evidences have shown that among the agro-ecosystem that exists in Southern Ethiopia, the Gedeo agroforestry system stands alone due its structural complexity, diversity, density and species abundance. In this regard, different studies have reported its uniqueness in terms plant biodiversity. For instance, Negash, Yirdaw & Luukkanen (2011) reported higher proportion of native woody species in Gedeo agroforestry system as compared to other enset-coffee-based agroforestry of the Southern Ethiopia. According to their findings, the Gedeo agroforestry maintain a higher proportion of naturally grown tree species. They also reported a higher woody species density in Gedeo agroforestry as compared to those recorded in neighboring Sidama. The same study made a comparison between the Gedeo and Sidama on the occurrence and number of stems of *M. ferruginea* which is the most abundant and frequent species in Gedeo. Accordingly, it is reported that the occurrence and number of stems on farm in Gedeo agroforestry is 77% higher than that was was reported in the neighboring Sidama.

According to Abebe (2013) in terms of species density, the overall mean density of woody species was estimated to be 5095 woody species per hectare; a value higher than other agroforestry areas in SW Ethiopia.

Mesfin, Demissew, & Teklehaymanot (2009) investigated medicinal plants in the Gedeo agroforestry taking one district as a case; and accordingly he reported a total of 198 plant species of which 133 species from wild vegetation, 43 species from home gardens and 22 species from both, belonging to 174 genera and 76 families. This is found to be higher than plant species recorded in other agroforestry systems in Southern and South Western parts of Ethiopia. A study conducted by Seta (2019) also reported a total of 195 plant species distributed in 155 genera and 66 families.

The system also has high potential of sequestering carbon and thereby contributing towards climate change mitigation. The agroforestry provides a particular example of a set of innovative practices that often contribute to mitigate climate change through enhanced carbon sequestration (Asfaw, 2009). Negash and Starr (2015) estimated the total biomass (above- plus belowground) values for the three agroforestry systems of the Gedeo. Accordingly they reported an amount that ranges between 105−173 Mg ha-1, which is found to be higher than the global average values for forest biomass and for some tropical forest types. The total aboveground biomass (trees, coffee, enset, herbs, and litter) C-stock ranged from 16 to 93 Mgha−1 among the smallholdings. The native wood species, soil and herbs were found to have a total biomass C stocks averaged 67 Mg ha−1, which was reported to be to be amongst the highest for tropical forests and agroforestry systems (Negash and Starr, 2015). Furthermore, the total biomass C stocks of the three agroforestry systems (49–116 Mg C ha-1) was to be substantially higher than the range reported for agroforestry systems in sub-Saharan Africa (4.5–19 Mg C ha-1) (Negash and Starr, 2015). The authors attributed the difference to the abundance of trees in the agroforestry system.

- **Human-environment interaction/human adaptation to the environment**

The Gedeo experience shows the intact human-environmental relationship that is maintained through indigenous institutions, values and practices. Gedeo is predominantly mountainous with rugged terrain that otherwise would have been difficult for settlement difficult if had it not been for their knowledge of harnessing their terrain and resource management gained through interactions with the environment.

The Gedeo maintained the agroforestry system through indigenous practices passed from generation to generation through narratives reproduced in interpersonal and traditional institutional channels. Their indigenous knowledge, cultural practices such as *Baboo, Ginbe, Qeexala, Daraaro* and strong traditional institutional structures that supported knowledge transmission from generation to generation enabled them to maintain their ecosystem.

Traditionally, the Gedeo have a great respect for nature, and have built a sense of reciprocity with it. From childhood, children are taught to associate trees with life and some places as sacred. The Gedeo also believe that by doing something good to non-human nature, people would be reciprocated in different ways. This is a fundamental ontological view of the Gedeo which creates harmony with the nature.

It is strictly forbidden to cut a tree from family's farmland or anywhere else without the permission from elders. This is mainly due to the fact that cutting indigenous trees without permission from elders is tantamount to transgressing rules enacted by the *Baalle* and *Songo* institutions. Transgression of the rules would lead to the exclusion of the transgressor from all kinds of social life of the local community. Once permission is obtained, one must wait for elders to mark indigenous trees which are to be used for construction. This is to avoid cutting of venerated tree or cursed trees. This is done to avoid the cutting of indigenous trees which have high ecological and cultural values. As such, this practice regulates human-human and human-environment relationships at the same time.

For the Gedeo, indigenous trees are often used for spiritual, cultural and other purposes. For example, as a fundamental part of the sacred spaces, indigenous trees such as *xibiro (Bersamaabyssinica Fresen*), *laafaa (Bruceaantidysenterica J. F. Mill), onoono*

(*Trichiliaemetica Vahl*), *deega (Celtisafricana Burm. F.) Waleena (Erytherina abyssinica), adaamaa (Euphorbia abyssinica)* and *rejjee (Vernonia auriculifera)* are given special places in interpersonal or public discussions and also for ritual practices. For instance, *xibiro (Bersamaabyssinica Fresen*) is considered as '*farro*', literally means bad fate. In addition, *laafaa, onoono,* and *deega are 'farro'* trees as utilization of these trees for fuel wood or for construction purposes is believed to inflict damage upon the person who cuts and use them. *Laafa* is believed to make people weak when used for fuel wood while *ononon* and *dega* are believed to bring conflict and poverty upon usage, respectively (Legesse, 2013; Dabalo et al., 2017). Due to the sacredness the trees, they are abundantly found on farmlands.

In Gedeo, forests, mountains, valleys, rivers and plains are essential elements of spiritual practices and have different symbolic meanings. In this context, certain rivers and mountains are used for ritual performances during conflict resolution enacted by the *Songo* and *Baalle* institutions and in turn strengthening eco-cultural relations (Dabalo et al., 2017). There is a common belief that maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature would please their God who they believe would reciprocate them with fertility, abundance, peace and health. In contrast, the people believe that if they destroy the environment, God will retaliate by holding back rain, and causing diseases and famine.. Owing to such traditional belief, the people give high values to nature.

At an overarching level, the notions of trees valued as important as life itself, , spiritual and ritual places given to trees, and the social values of the environment are transmitted through various channels including evening time storytelling, whereby elders narrate stories to children (Dabalo et al., 2017).

The Gedeo elders link good or bad yield to human- environment relationship. They believe that humans should behave in certain ways that help maintain harmonious relations between themselves and nature and thereby harvest better yield. The Gedeo elders believe that protecting nature results in good harvest. This is maintained through *ballee* and *songo* institutions which enact religious and spiritual sanctions upon those who transgress the customary rules. Gedeo elders believe the environment can restrict its bounty in response to abusive human behavior .
Whenever there is a calamity such as prolonged drought, prevalence of locust and diseases or a decline in yield of crop, the people perform rituals such as *qeexela* (asking *Magano*, "God," to give rain or to not hold back rain). *Qeexala* is a form of prayer and songs performed by the Gedeo. .It is believed to enhance communication between *Magano* and the Gedeo through rituals and songs. Such practices encourage people to adhere to the principles of indigenous institutions and to refrain from transgressing indigenous environmental ethics, values, and rules (Dabalo et al., 2017). All these strategies are meant to maintain the harmony between humans and environment through strict sanctions against people who transgress environmental ethics of the society.

**Socio cultural setup of the Gedeo communities:**
The Gedeo believe that values attributed to nature are inherited from their ancestors. Most of the agroforestry practices are culturally embedded. Conservation and management of the agroforestry is based on indigenous knowledge and practices. The indigenousness of the practices is manifested through the use of hoe for cultivation, selection of important indigenous

trees, compost preparation, intercropping, rehabilitation of degraded land through local practices such as *'Urane'* and '*Mona*', management of plants through a local practice known as *'baboo'*, intensification of agriculture and through the implementation of different indigenous land management practices.

Above all, traditional institutions such *ballee* and songo enact different customary laws, rules, regulations, norms and codes of social relations that govern the interaction of human kind with nature. Most of the 'social code of conduct' that the Gedeo practices to manage the landscape is governed by the *ballee* system. That enabled them to maintain harmony of the bio- cultural diversity. Through its Ya'a council, *ballee* system governs the distribution and proper utilization of land – the most importance resource.

Trees are not cut unless there is a justifiable reason to do so. Even then, they do not do it without the permission from elders. One cannot cut unless the tree to be cut is marked by elders. This is principally to avoid cutting old venerated trees that were planted by their ancestors and which have high ecological and cultural values.

Trees are used to give names for newborn babies, places, traditional institutions such as Songo. In the same manner indigenous trees are also named by a person who planted it. For instance, **Halgo Ganche** Gudubo, **Hachana** Garbe, **Adame** Garbe, **Mulate** Birbirsa, **Taro chanqo** Oda'e, **Hadame eyasa** Garbe, **Taro Bushe** Wadessa and **Banse** Wadessa are among indigenous tree species named based on a person who planted them first (Legesse, 2013).

Indigenous trees are used in most of the ritual practices, and social events such as marriage, death, birth, wedding and others. For instance, when a mother gives birth to a baby, a branch of an indigenous tree, locally known as *Garbe (Pruns africanus)*, is placed on both sides of the entrance to the hut/compound announcing that there is a newborn baby. The placement of the leaf also signifies a warning sign for the father-in-laws not to meet the mother of the newly born. The sanction stays for four months. This traditional practice is known as *Gadabo.*

In Gedeo, the traditional institutions of *Baalle* and *Songo* serve as important institutional structures that govern social life, conduct, and environmental behavior. Like the Gadaa system of the Oromo or the Luwa system of the Sidama – the two neighboring groups to the Gedeo – the *Baalle* institution is an overarching system that governs and sets rules on all parts of life including the socio-cultural, political, administrative, and spiritual.

In conclusion, the Gedeo agroforestry system, alike other agroforestry landscape in the country has under gone through series of biophysical and socio-economic changes as a result of the complex co-evolutionary process between natural, social, economic and political systems. The system is identified to be the most resilient, and self-regenerating. The landscape is not only a home of diverse species of plants and animals. It is also a home for large number population whose livelihood predominantly depends on natural resources. Unlike the others, for the Gedeo, the agroforestry system is not used as supplementary to other livelihood means; rather it is the principal source of livelihood for the population (Degefa , 2016).

**History of the Gedeo:**

As it has been indicated in the Nomination File (pp. 66-70), the Gedeo believed to live in North Africa and the Horn areas, with other Kushitic speaking people some 10000 years ago (Wolassa, 2018; Shibru, 2015; Mulatu, 2005). They gradually moved southward and found their way to Sagan, Sagago, Yavello, and later back to Boko, Borana, Haarridiida, and finally they settled around *Harsu* and *Hawata* (Braukamper, 1983), around 5th millennia BC (Shibiru, 2015; Mulatu, 2005).

During the end of 5th millennia, the forefather of the Gedeo, Borena and Guji – *Jille Jida*, who was believed to live in *Harsu* and *Hawata*, blessed his three sons, *Darasoo*, *Booru* and *Uraagoo* in his old age. It is from this fact that the Gedeo trace their origin principally to *Harsu* and *Hawata* during their ritual procession. They often sign the following song to trace their origin.

> *'Harsuu'n fullee Hawwaxii'n dangenne no'o jilati hado hoo hoo*', literally to mean 'we came from *Harsu* and *Hawata* and we are people of peace and different rituals'

Upon his death, *Jilla Jida*, blessed his three sons, accordingly, the senior son, *Daraso*, received a blessing that enable him to cultivate land while *Booru* and *Uraago* were blessed to undertake pastoralism and bee hiving, respectively.

Then *Daraso* who was a polygam gave birth to the seven patrilineal Gedeo clans, three from the senior wife (*Hemba, Logoda* and *Bakarro*) and four (*Darasha, Hannuma, Doba* and *Gorgosha*) from his second wife. Later on, after the death of Daraso the seven clans moved from *Harsu* and *Hawata* to *Harowolaabo* area (currently in *Bule District*) and further moved to the west to *Odaaya'a*, *Kolishsha-Kaarra*, *Dakku'wa-Hashare*, *Ho'lichcha* and *Wochchamma* areas. It was from *Oda Ya'a* (this sacred place is within the nominated area) that the seven clans began to disperse by dividing the land among themselves. Each clan thus, was awarded specified territory (locally known as *Daraba*), although individuals were free to settle where they wished (McClellan, 1988).

*Oda Ya'a* is a core area where the clans performed an oath to maintain social bondage between and among each clan and established a new sociopolitical administrative system, the *Baallee* system. Following the establishment of *ballee* system, the *Ya'a* councils, assemblies of all adult males, but dominated by elders ([i]), was given the mandate to distribute land to the seven clans. Then the councils distributed the land in different parts of Gedeo and accordingly, *Darashsha* (the eldest clan of the Gedeo) and *Gorgorsha* moved to the northeast; *Henba'a* and *Logoda* moved to the West, while *Bakarro, Doobbe'a* and *Hanuma* moved to the South and South West. The nominated area was part of land distribution, thus, each clan has its own share of land within the nominated area. Thus, according to oral tradition, the nominated area was under the administration of *ya'a* council who has the mandate to administer and distribute land within the nominated area. When we see land sharing with respect to nominated area, majority of the area proposed for the nomination was believed to be given to *Darashsha, and Gorgorsha*, while the remaining clans possessing relatively lesser than *Darashsha, and Gorgorsha*, Thus, according to oral tradition, the area currently proposed for nomination originally belongs to the Gedeo, although the then population utilizing the area for different purposes were believed to be very small, and fragmented (McClellan, 1988).

It is to be considered also that the Gedeo, like most ethnic groups in Ethiopia must have undergone periods of population movement. It is argued that by the middle ages, there was a great wave of population movements in Ethiopia. It is widely accepted that the present day distributions of most groups was a result of these population movements, resettlements and mixing. However, it is difficult to assert with certitude, at this time, which ethnic groups occupied their actual areas at what period. Further archaeological investigations and possibly genetic studies will be needed to better understand the issue at hand. It is true that population growth was a factor favoring occupation of more areas. In the absence of hard data, we are left with oral traditions, folklores, linguistic and cultural ties between the archaeological findings on the landscape, the rituals and materials associated.

**History of coffee cultivation in Gedeo:**

Coffee berries were in use in south and south and south west of Ethiopia prior to its consumption by wider communities in its brewed form. The cultivation of coffee for commercial purpose was enhansed since the formation of the Ethiopian central administration in the area. More land was used for coffee. This did not however affect the cultivation of enset plant which remained/ constituted the staple food of the Gedeo people. Studies conducted in this regard show that coffee based agroforestry system in Gedeo evolved through domestication of forest berries and then intensification of agriculture (Negash and Achalu, 2008). Coffee was found growing as a wild crop in the forest in the remote past, although its importance as commercial crop increased later, after the area is incorporated in the Ethiopian empire (McClellan, 1988). However, during the pre-conquest period, the local people were producing wild coffee mainly for home consumption, cultural purposes and for commodity exchange (McClellan, 1988). McClellan (1988) noted that "*...It is difficult to know how Gedeo related to this pre-conquest commercial network. ...Enset would have been the most important commodity, for which the Gedeo had good reputation. Limited amount of wild coffee were harvested for exchange" (Pp.105);* Suggesting that the Gedeo were harvesting wild coffee before its incorporation to the Ethiopian Empire.

Before Gedeo's incorporation, coffee was mainly produced for subsistence use. However, later on, declining supply of ivory and slaves led to economic diversification which in turn led to subsequent decline in revenues and continued economic pressure on the indigenous population. This must have contributed coffee to be an increasingly important commodity (McCellelan, 1978) and thus, its cultivation had shown a remarkable expansion. The expansion continued in the post-conquest period and resulted in inhabitation of the no-man's zone, which was not used for settlement (McCellelan, 1978).

According to MCcellean,

> *'... the Gedeo number about 250,000 and occupy an area in excess of 1,200 square kilometers of land. Both the population and territory have grown considerably over the last eighty years. The Gedeo were confined to the upper slopes of a chain of hills running southward along the Rift Valley escarpment east of Lake Abaya. Despite their intensive cultivation of ensete ventricosum, Gedeo in the 1890 needed new lands to accommodate a growing population. ... . The Sidama seem to have enjoyed the upper hand until the coming of the Ethiopians who stabilized ethnic boundaries (when it was to their advantage) and confined the Sidama north of the river. This policy permitted Gedeo to settle permanently in areas that once had been too highly contested for them to control*

*effectively. Gedeo also expanded down-slope into areas utilized by Guji made weak by a recent drought and famine.*

*After the Ethiopian occupation, individual Gedeo used this forested no-man zone to escape their northern overlords; by the 1920, as the demand for the forest's wild coffee rose, Ethiopians actively encouraged the clearance and cultivation of these areas by Gedeo settlers. This expansion continues today with Gedeo farming land to the west of Dilla and Wonago and around Koti, the traditional home of the Guji kallu (religious leader). They have migrated southward to the vicinity of Agere Mariam in Uraga country and probably eastward as well. Even with this expansion, Gedeo population densities have remained among the highest in Ethiopia, estimated, despite the lack of satisfactory demographic data, at 150-200 persons per square kilometer with concentrations as high as 500. Fortunately, for the Gedeo, they cultivate a unique food crop which permits high population concentrations. Their traditional ensete, high in carbohydrates, but protein deficient, nevertheless provides one of the highest caloric intake ratios per hectare of any agricultural crop. The plant's luxuriant foliage also provides fodder for housed livestock as well as thatching for housing; it can be fashioned into clothing, containers, or binding for the packaging of market produce.'' Pp.61-64*

**Documentation**

In order to generate and estimate the proportion of areas occupied by settlement, agroforestry, and sacred forests, high resolution SPOT image was used along with data collected from field and Google earth Pro. The image was classified based on maximum likelihood algorithm and accordingly five land use/cover classes were generated (see table 1 and fig.1). Among the land use/cover types, agroforestry cover the largest proportion of the nominated area. Built up/settlement cover only 9.0% of the nominated area while farmland dominated by cereal crops accounts for 0.9% of the nominated area.

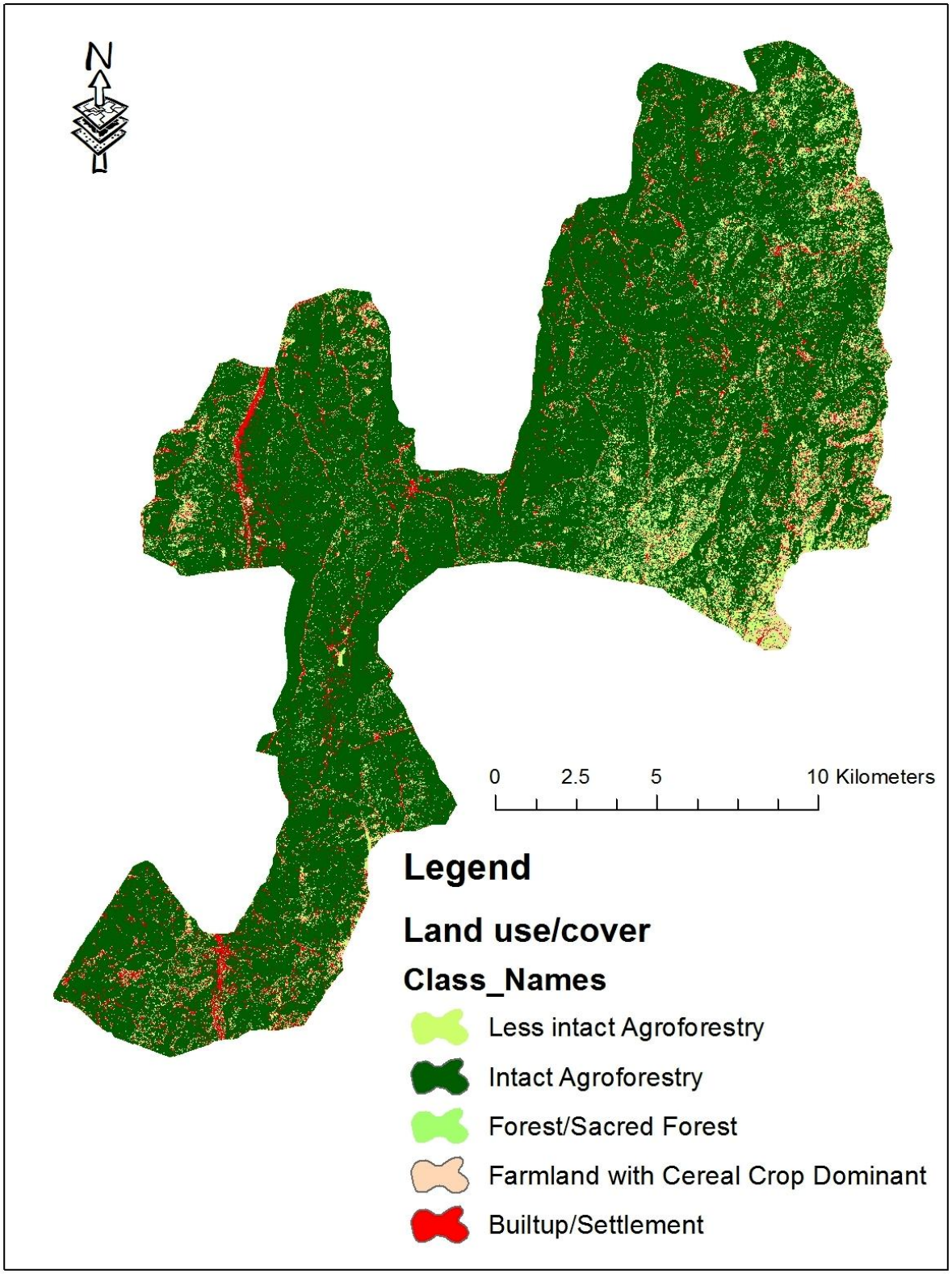


Figure 1: Land use/cover map of the nominated area

Table 1 Land use/cover of the Nominated area

| **Land use/cover type** | **Area in Ha** | **%** | **Remark** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Built-up/Settlement | 2,672.00 | 9.0[1] | Built up/Settlement areas include individual houses, roads, ritual places(Songo), wet coffee washing sites, market centers, schools and health posts |
| Forest/Sacred forest | 51.3 | 0.2 | Forest area includes areas covered with indigenous trees only with no coffee or enset. Sacred forests such as burial grounds are also classified under this category |
| Less intact agroforestry | 3,275.00 | 11.1 | This land use includes areas covered mainly by enset and Coffee-enset agroforestry system which is characterized by sparse tree cover. |
| Intact agroforestry | 23,351.00 | 78.8 | The intact agroforestry land use includes areas covered with coffee-enset agroforestry land use with high density of indigenous trees |
| Farmland with cereal crop dominant | 280.00 | 0.9 | Farmland stands for a land covered with cereal crops with enset plant growing around homestead; trees are almost absent in this land use, confined to farm border alone. |
| **Total** | **29,629.30** | **100.00** | |

Source: Spot image-2016 (1.5m resolution) and Google earth pro and field survey, 2021

Although the settlement is an integral part of the agroforestry system, its uncontrolled expansion, driven by rapid population growth and development of road infrastructure will obviously threaten the sustainability of the system. Our image analysis results and discussion with the local people have shown that there is a growing demand for houses in the rural areas and this has led to expansion of settlement in the last two decades.

When we look at the distribution pattern of settlement in the nominated area, it appears to have two patterns. One is linear, which is dominant along road side while the other is scattered. The scattered settlement is located on individual farmland away from the roadside. In terms of density, the linear one is found to be dense while the scattered settlement is lesser dense.

In terms of functions of the settlement, majority of them are used for residential purpose. However, there are rural market centers, ritual places and wet coffee washing sites which are within the nominated areas. The market centers are open spaces where the local people sale and buy commodities. The market centers are few in number and also small in size. One of this

[1] *The proportion of settlement computed from high resolution SPOT image (1.5 meters) was computed to be 9%; this is slightly different from our previous Nov. 2021 report which was generated from course resolution Landsat image (30meters). Moreover, the number of land use/cover we generated in our previous report was only three (Agroforestry, settlement and forest) while in the current report it is five. Thus, note that resolution and number of land use/cover classes are the source of variation.*

market centers named *'Kudha'* is located within the nominated area and it has a bigger size (2.19ha) as compared to settlement/ built up areas in the nominated area (see fig 2). The other market center is located in the central part of the nominated area and measures 1.3 ha (see fig 4). The wet coffee washing sites are only functional during coffee harvesting seasons, which last for only three months. During the remaining nine months, the sites are used for cultivation of annual crops, mainly maize.

The plot size of most the individual residential compounds are between 45- 80 $m^2$. The size may exceed 100 $m^2$ in case of an extended family living in one compound. In such case, we can find three to four separate houses built in one compound. These are commonly found away from roadside, on individual farmlands.

Most of the settlements within the nominated area have access to electricity, school and health services. However, these services are not widely available for those settlements which are far from the roadside. The services are largely available along road side.

More than 95% of houses within the nominated area are made from local materials. Their walls are made from eucalyptus and other trees while the roof is covered with corrugated iron sheet or enset leaves.

**Figure 2 Distribution pattern of Settlement in the Nominated area around Kudha market center (Source: Planet earth, 2022)**

Figure 3:Distribution pattern of settlement in the Nominated area

**Figure 4 Market center in the nominated area**

Figure 5: Wet coffee washing site within the nominated area

Farmlands with cereal crops are located in the higher altitude (highland region) of the nominated area. This area is much favored for production of cereal crops. This part of the landscape is not suitable for the coffee cultivation, thus farmers use it to cultivate cereal crops along with enset. In addition to highland areas, there are also pocket areas in the middle parts of the nominated where cereal crop cultivation, mainly maize mixed with beans, is practiced. This practice is dominantly found close to homesteads and it is only for home consumption. The local people do this only to subsidize their livelihood during low coffee season (May-August). During low coffee season, those people who heavily relay on income obtained from coffee face challenges. They may not have the finance to purchase some food stuff for their daily consumption. Thus, in order to subsidize their livelihood they often grow maize, beans and also root crops close to homestead. Thus, cultivation of cereal crops as dominant practice is undertaken in the highland areas where coffee does not grow at all. However, in enset-coffee belt the production of cereals is only for home consumption and it is practiced on a very small plot of land.

Regarding eucalyptus trees, we are not able to exactly quantify its coverage and expansion from SPOT image due to similarities in spectral reflectance between indigenous trees and eucalyptus. As the tree is only found along borders between individual farms and roadsides, its coverage is very small. However, based on information from the local people and our own observations, although not very significant, there is an increasing trend of eucalyptus plantation. However, despite a growing interest to expand eucalyptus tree, the ecological impacts of the tree on coffee and enset plant deter the local people from expanding further to coffee and enset farms.

**Sustainable land use plan**

We thank ICOMOS for its very valuable reflection in this regard. The technical team and the zonal administration are cognizant of the multi-faceted threats that the landscape is facing due to the fast changing demographic, economic and landscape management issues. It has increasingly become the concern of the Gedeo communities and the local intelligentsia that the preservation, management and sustainable use of agroforestry and the traditions that surround it be protected. It is also true that the policies of the central and the regional governments support efforts to that end. However, more work is required by dedicated local government officials to implement them. Schools are now more engaged in bringing to light the so far neglected local social history. This has created sense of pride on the young and an increasing interest on the agroforestry, sacred lands, and megalithic sites.

The local and global dynamics such as demographic pressure, modernization, globalization, economic pressure, development of infrastructure and others are threatening the sustainability of the landscape. The increasing challenges of population growth, globalization, economic pressure, demands on limited resources by diverse actors, biodiversity loss and climate change require the rational use of resources to sustain and enhance productivity and maintain resilient ecosystems (Ziadat, F., Bunning, S., & Pauw, E. D, 2017).

As we have indicated in the clarification note we submitted in Nov. 2021, some efforts in relation to conservation – livelihood approach are already in place to address some of the key challenges. There are also activities which have been undertaken by Gedeo Zone Land administration and Land Use Plan office. Concerted efforts are needed from all stakeholders to

overcome the challenges and maintain the sustainability of the system. Therefore, the state party highly acknowledges the concern of ICOMOS and we took it very seriously.

A series of discussions were held together with regional and zonal officials to discern what activities are already in place to maintain the resilience of the landscape and also what should be done to sustain the landscape. It is known that several strategies have been underway by various sectors but these lacked coordination. For instance, the Gedeo Zone Land Administration and Land Use Plan office has prepared local Land Use Plan for 68 kebeles through Participatory programs and currently the office is undertaking preparation of the plan for five more additional kebeles. However, the fact that the plan is prepared only at kebele level makes it less comprehensive.

Cognizant of this issue, the zonal administration had undertaken a consultative meeting with stakeholders to discuss the issue of the preparation of Sustainable land use plan for the nominated area. As it is very much demanding and urgent to develop the plan for the nominated area, consensus was reached among the discussants to start the preparation of the plan in collaboration with Dilla University. Higher government officials of the zone, including the chief administrator of the zone and the chairman of Gedeo cultural landscape management committee are determined to realize this task in short period of time. Towards this, the Zonal administration has established a committee consisting of 16 members selected from different sectors in the zone and Dilla University who will prepare the plan within six months (see annex 1).

Dilla University pledged to assign academic and research staff that will take part in the preparation of the plan while the zone administration is committed to finance the work. The plan is scheduled to be completed within the next six months.

**Megalithic monuments**

We are very glad that the ICOMOS is following new developments regarding research works in Gedeo. Dr. Ashenafi Zena's "New Dates for Megallithic stele Monuments of Gedeo, South Ethiopia" which appeared in Journal of Anthropological Archaeology 64 (2021) 101372 has indeed pushed the dates of the site further back in time. We agree that this is an important research finding which shows that more research work is required in the area. It may be possible that sites were occupied and reoccupied repeatedly through time. Ashenafi's new dates are suggestive of the deep time antiquity of the megalithic tradition in southern Ethiopia, at least at Sakaro Sodo. Duff A. I.'s and Ashenafi's work in Gedeo during the last decade was made possible through the support and permit of the Ethiopian Center for Research and Conservation of Cultural heritage and the Culture Bureau of the SNNPRS. The Ethiopian institutions will continue to support archaeological works by American and French based research institutions and young scholars in Gedeo.

Research conducted by Grillo and Hildebrand and colleagues (*Grillo and Hildebrand 2013; Hildebrand et al. 2011Hildebrand and Grillo 2012)* in the Turkana Basin had already brought to light that megalithic monuments were part of the culture by 5$^{th}$ Millennium BC. These results will add on the already established ideas on the history of the very rich and widely distributed

megalithic cultures in East Africa and shed more light on the settlements, economies and social organizations of the various communities.

In Gedeo, as continuation of the archaeological research undertaken by R. Jaussaume, further research programs are planned and are underway by Ann-Lise Goujon from the French Center for Ethiopian Studies (CFEE), Addis Ababa. Dr. Goujon has worked in Gedeo for several years and still continues her research in collaboration with her international team members, mainly from France and the Dilla University in Gedeo. It is deemed important to build local institutional base for the study of archaeology and indigenous knowledge.

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## List of key Informants consulted

| No. | Name | Sex | Age | Societal Rank | Place of Interview | Date of Interview |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mengesha Kurse | M | 78 | Guduro | Wochchamma | 15 January 2022 |
| 2 | Tilahun Ibido | M | 73 | Luba | Dilla | 22 January 2022 |
| 3 | Hailu Beyene | M | 68 | Raaba | // | 22 January 2022 |
| 4 | Gebru Qaqqabo | M | 69 | Raaba | // | // |
| 5 | Jibichcho Boorami | M | 75 | Yuba | // | 9 February 2022 |
| 6 | Alemayehu Hirbe | M | 67 | Cowwajje | Wonago | 30 January 2022 |
| 7 | Tadesse Baredi, | M | 70 | Luba | Rakko | 12 February 2022 |
| 8 | Dhibbaa Malde'I, , | M | 72 | Guduro | Dilla | 12 February 2022 |

Annex 1: Letter

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የጌዴኦ ዞን አስተዳደር ጽ/ቤት
South nations Nationalities and people's Regional State
Gedeo Zone Adminstrator Office

Laakoossa/ቁጥር Ge120/2733/2013

Barra/ቀን 09-06-2014

To:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Mr Zinabu Wolde:** | Deputy Administrator of Gedeo Zone & Head of Agriculture & Natural Resource Office .....Chairman |
| **Mr Mulugeta W/Yes:** | Head of Gedeo Zone land administration and Land Use Plan Department .....Member |
| **Mr Esays Abebe:** | Gedeo Zone Agriculture & Natural resource |
| **Mr Nistu Kebede :** | Gedeo Zone education sector..... Member |
| **Mr Dawit Feyisa:** | Gedeo Zone Health sector.....Member |
| **Mr Mengistu Tekele:** | Gedeo zone Urban development & plan sector.....Member |
| **Mr Tesfaye Kebede:** | Gedeo zone plan and population studies sector .....Member |
| **Mr. Asmamu Tilhun:** | Environment, climate change and Forestry sector.....Member |
| **Ms. Melkamnesh yichinku:** | Culture & Tourism Sector .....Member |
| **Mr Sebsibe Adula:** | Water and Mineral Resources Sector .....Member |
| **Dr Habtamu Temesegen:** | Land Use Planner and Natural Resource Management expert, from Dilla University..... Member |
| **Dr Temesegen Nigus:** | Archeologist, Tourism experts and Historian, from Dilla University .....Member |
| **Mr Mesfin Demisse** | Educational planner....Member |
| **Mr Tesfaye Gedicho:** | Public health experts, Demographer from Dilla University....Member |
| **Mr Haile Ketema:** | Land use planner, Natural resource management expert, from Dilla University....Member |

**Subject:** Notifying Committee membership

It is know that we are in the process of registering the Gedeo Cultural Landscape as World Heritage. So far, we have managed to submit nomination dossier and management plan and we also received comments from ICOMOS panel of experts after the ICOMOS delegate made an extensive evaluation of landscape being here. We know that our fore-ancestors and ancestors have kept the sustainability of the landscape through their longstanding indigenous knowledge and practices. However, we believe that the on-going local and global dynamics such as modernization, globalization, population and economic pressures, expansion of settlement seem to be beyond the capacity of the existing indigenous practices to sustain the landscape. As government, we have been implementing different strategies to overcome the challenges. However, those strategies are not enough to withstand the challenges and keep the sustainability of the landscape. This issue has been already raised by ICOMOS panel of experts and we acknowledge their big concern and determined to act accordingly. As part of this commitment, we are planning to develop a holistic Sustainable Land Use Plan for the cultural landscape. Thus, we would like to notify you that you are assigned to develop of the Sustain Land Use Plan within the coming six Months (March, 2022- August, 2022) so that we can make it ready for proper implementation in 2014 E.C fiscal year. We would like to reiterate that the zone administration is determined to provide any necessary support to the committee members to realize the development of the plan.

With regards,
Cc: Dilla University