Improving the quality, quantity and availability of seed in Amhara Region
Dear our esteemed reader!

This is a special edition of the 5th volume since we began with the “ISSD Amhara” flag in 2012. In this issue we have included stories and views on major achievements of ISSD Amhara in the past four years and an overview of the major focus areas of the new BENEFIT ISSD project that runs until end of 2019.

In the first section, we tried to address the major achievements of the past four years (2012-2015) such as facilitating smooth system change and introducing innovations in the seed sector, increasing the quality and quantity of seed production, strengthening quality assurance mechanisms and seed marketing.

ISSD Amhara has been successful is facilitating smooth system changes and pioneering innovations in the seed sector development of the region. System change at seed research, seed multiplication and distribution stages plus seed system governance have contributed a lot in the growth of the crop production sector of the country.

The recent increase in crop production of the country could not have come without the use of quality seed. The new government figures (2008 E.C) revealed that crop production was the major source of growth in agriculture in Ethiopia. According to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation, crop production grew by 7.2 per cent contributing 28 percent of the whole Economy. ISSD Ethiopia has significant share in this growth.

In marking the closing of the four year activities, innovations and achievements of ISSD Amhara that it pioneered in the four years were presented to regional stakeholders. Farmers, private and public seed producers, local and regional stakeholders provided their testimonies for the achievements. The testimonies reiterate that ISSD has made significant contribution in the development of the seed sector in general and small holder farmers’ income in particular.

In this special issue we have included a glimpse of these testimonies to share with you. The views of stakeholders have been also used to shape the focus of the new BENEFIT ISSD programme which will focus more on enhancing quality in the seed sector. We wish you a pleasant reading and welcome you for your comments!

Aderaw Genetu
ISSD is working on the strategic input of agriculture – seed – which improves productivity up to 50 per cent. The achievements of ISSD in the past four years are exemplary in facilitating smooth system change and pioneering innovations for improving the quality, quantity and availability of seed in Amhara region.

With the coming of ISSD, system changes have come on the seed sector in the region. Direct Seed Marketing (DSM) have brought seed distribution to be easy, fast and efficient with accountability and traceability in place for quality seed sold. The establishment of quality regulatory authority has strengthened the capacity of the authority and accessibility of its services by providing expanded regulation, quarantine and advisory roles to seed sector players. The core group is serving as the regional seed sector governing body where all key stakeholders are represented in the decision making. The strong contribution of seed producer cooperatives has brought up the recognition of the third wing of seed system - the intermediate seed system which fills the gap of informal/formal systems.

As seed is now produced by cooperatives, private and public institutions, the volume of seed produced in the region has swelled in the past years. When we see the beginning and end targets of the GTP1, certified seed used in the region has expanded from 78,000 to 165,000 quintals (211%).

Improving the quality of seed, which was characterized by poor quality (high adulteration, mould seed, broken seed, none uniform seed), high yield loss, low population density and low germination rates, was also a target. Low awareness and knowledge of quality seed coupled with limited capacity in quality control have been affecting seed quality. Now with improved knowledge and capacity and use of better technology, production and marketing system, the seed quality supplied in region has significantly improved. The amount of left over seed declined every year. Disposal of the left over seed has been also a huge cost for the regional government.

Developing market orientation was one of the key objectives in the ISSD seed sector development. The underline idea is customer satisfaction (quality product, affordable price and availability). Different capacity development initiatives, infrastructure supports, facilitating the creation of conducive environment has helped seed producers to be more market oriented. The direct seed marketing system was one way of developing the seed sector for more market orientation. Quality is the base for productivity and the best incentive for quality is good price governed by marketing principles.

At the centre of all these efforts is capacity development. From grant support to skill and knowledge changing trainings, workshops and experience sharing have been given to seed producers, supporters and stakeholders.

However this development of the seed sector is not enough to be proud. There are a lot of challenges that are yet to be tackled. The shortage of basic seed tops the list. Looking at the GTPII targets show how far the gap is in seed supply and demand in the region yet to be filled. The sustainability of the innovations with their most desired effects require more work at the ground. Due to the limited resources such as land, finance, and professionals in the sector, the vibrancy of the seed sector demands more coordinated work at different levels.

With our new BENEFIT ISSD programme, we included the informal seed sector in our focus to better develop the way farmers share quality and improved seed among themselves and address the most disadvantaged groups such as women and neglected crops - crops with less emphasis by both the formal and intermediate seed systems.

Hence, my final message to all stakeholders of the seed sector is to strengthen further our partnerships and consorted efforts so as to see significant results at the end of this programme and beyond.

Dereje Ayalew (PhD),
ISSD Amhara Scientific coordinator!
Partnerships in Action

ISSD Amhara’s success in creating regional partnerships for improving community benefits

First of all, I would like to congratulate the ISSD Amhara project leaders and team members for the successful completion of ISSD-II project from 2012 - 2015. As Institutional Advisor of the project, I am excited by the successes of the project at this point, as well as the way forward recommended for further scaling ups from the successes of this project. I am also delighted that the success of ISSD is going to continue with another phase.

Congratulations to you all who were part and parcel of this wonderful project starting from Wageningen to the Ethiopia national coordination unit and regional core group as well as all ISSD Amhara actors!

Bahir Dar University (BDU) has a vision of becoming among the ten top premier research universities in Africa by 2025. To achieve its vision, it is working at its best level to make differences in the community by doing community based researches and services including knowledge and technology transfers. The research activities are shaped based on major thematic areas which are identified based on the urban and rural community demand of the country. Especially in the community service provision part of the university, the rural and urban models are identified for effective and measurable interventions through knowledge and technology (research output) transfer activities.

BDU is working with different stakeholders by developing projects which are more of community based interventions. One of the many we have is the ISSD Amhara region project. As this project is hosted by BDU, the university is trying to bring all stakeholders in the seed system on board by creating forums to work together. All universities and agricultural research centers found in Amhara region have created a working forum using the ISSD project as a means to work together with the cooperatives who are working in the seed system. This organizational forum encouraged universities and research centers even to intervene more than expected in the seed system. This ISSD based partnership is now scaled up at universities, research centers, government and private seed sectors in the seed sector development activities as well as local community groups where the seed issue is becoming a common language.

The project started with supporting 8 local seed producer cooperatives which are now well consolidated and scaling up another 63 in the second phase. The project is a coordination demanding by its nature where the core groups established by the partnership of many seed system actors at regional as well as down to woreda level come together and share the tasks equally. That is why the sustainability of the project was well managed from the very beginning and owned by each partner of the project. Bahir Dar University is proud to manage such a big and successful project together with our partners. We are happy to see the seed system growing from different dimension.

The experience of ISSD shows that by working together with stakeholders, differences can be made in the community starting from grass root up to the top decision-makers levels. The Finance Fair organized by ISSD Amhara was an example here to which that showed possibilities of the seed and finance sectors can work together for the betterment of the community. The direct seed marketing we created as a new culture of seed delivery as well as other wonderful mini-projects we executed together with our regional partners, are another good examples how partnership benefits communities. The feedbacks from universities in the region working with ISSD programme are encouraging where they used this as a means to widen their community engagements in different disciplines. This is a kind of success we witnessed from ISSD Amhara.

BDU appreciates the impact of this single project in the community where we are able to see motivated farmers in the seed system. The stakeholders of the seed system in the region are also active in all projects developed by ISSD-BDU which is a litmus paper for the positive development of the project. BDU will institutionalize and forward the success stories of this project to others so that they will create forums which will entertain the interests of many projects for a single mission of the community development in the region.

Tesfaye Shiferaw (PhD)

*This message was written by Dr. Tesfaye Shiferaw, former ISSD-BDU Institutional Advisor and V/President for Research and Community Services of Bahir Dar University, in celebrating the successful accomplishment of ISSD 2012-2015 phase. (January 2016)
Public and private enterprises and farmer cooperatives produce and supply seed in Amhara region. Providing support to these seed producers to be efficient and effective in the seed marketing system at all levels is one of the key objectives of ISSD. Effective seed marketing helps seed to be available to farmers at the right time, place, price, amount, and of the highest economic quality.

**The bottleneck**

There have been multiple and interdependent challenges for effective seed marketing in earlier times. Seed marketing has been highly centralized and the price was entirely fixed by government. Bureau of agriculture buys the seed produced by all seed growers and supplies/distributes to farmers through unions and primary cooperatives with fixed price. It is claimed that the fixed price did not fully consider costs of production and profit margin. This has been discouraging seed producers to continue in seed business. Other challenges include low trust on seed producers, lack of market facilities, and lack of business orientation/attitude. Seed growers produce seed without critically assessing the demand of local farmers and hence their products (crops and varieties) are less competitive in the market. As a result, there were high leftover seed within the region every year particularly of hybrid maize.

The absence of alternative seed marketing channel, lack of competition among seed growers, lack of quality seed, limited financial capabilities/access to credit facilities, untimely seed supply, weak linkages between producers and end consumers, lack of accountability and traceability, unwanted bureaucratic channel in seed distribution, and high adulteration by seed producers & middlemen were also the other bottlenecks for effective seed marketing. All these above challenges were contributing to low quality seed production and limited seed supply.

**ISSD’s intervention**

To mitigate the challenges related to seed marketing, ISSD Amhara programme in collaboration with regional stockholders and other development partners has intervened with aim to make seed marketing of the region more efficient and effective. ISSD facilitated and organized continuous forums, workshops, trainings and experiences sharing visits for seed producers and partners that raised awareness on issues of seed pricing, promotion, competition, customer handling, storing seed, supplying quality seed, use of market information, market assessment and linkages with partners. In addition, ISSD Amhara allocated grants for private and cooperative seed growers to facilitate their marketing activities, which was particularly used for the construction of standard warehouses, procurement of seed processing machines, and for product promotion.

Introduction and promotion of Direct Seed Marketing (DSM) as new marketing system was one breakthrough approach to fasten the proper seed marketing in the region. In DSM approach, market has been opened to all seed growers to sell their produce directly to end consumers in a competitive base. Various studies such as profitability analysis of seed and grain production, niche market assessment and seed demand assessment have also been conducted to identify challenges and forward possible recommendations for effective implementation and as inputs for policy dialogue.

**The results**

Implementing DSM in the region has shorten the lengthy process/channel of seed delivery, reduced bureaucracy in seed supply, increased accountabilities & responsibilities, improved trust among seed value chain actors and improved quality seed delivery. Besides, it saved farmers time and avoided unnecessary cost, improved timely seed supply, increased farmers’ motivation to use improved seed, minimized work load of the extension workers and administrators, and created an opportunity for farmers to choose the best quality seed from alternative suppliers. Moreover, with the grants provided, seed producers built crucial infrastructures of seed marketing facilities that enhanced the capacity of seed producers to market quality seeds to farmers both to the formal channel and informally for local users.

Although, there have been successful interventions implemented and hence ample results achieved in developing

**Continued to page 12**
Seed is a key input for improving crop production and productivity and achieving food security. Increasing the quality of seed can increase the yield potential of the crop by a significant amount. Provision of quality seed of superior varieties to small holder farmers has been a challenge in Ethiopia. ISSD’s study of the status of seed quality in Amhara region in 2011 confirms the extent of this challenge. A number of steps that aimed at meeting the challenges has been taken since.

Seed quality- a major bottleneck

According to the study conducted by LSB project (ISSD) in Amhara Region in 2011 quality deterioration exists in the whole classes of seed starting from the breeder and pre-basic seed provided by the research centres to the certified seed produced.

The list of major seed quality related problems identified in the region are long. These include adulteration (adding ‘foreign matter’ to the pure seed), shrivelled seed, existence of mold, broken seed, non-uniform seed in size and color, low germination percentage, limited knowledge and skill in internal quality controlling, low awareness of seed producers and supporting partners to importance of seed quality, limited skill and knowledge in quality seed production and handling, absence of quality based differentiated pricing strategy, lack of accountability on quality issues, limited internal quality laboratories and professionals, weak external quality control and monitoring activities in terms of area coverage and professionalism, poor linkage between research, extension and seed producers to produce quality seed, high field rejection rate by quality seed inspectors, incomplete quality control of seed classes by seed regulatory body. Moreover, government involvement in seed production and quality control at the same time was difficult to execute the mandate of the seed regulatory authority.

Working towards solutions

To address the above wide spread problems ISSD Amhara initiated integrated interventions together with key regional partners.

1. Awareness and Capacity

Based on the identified problems in the study one of the solutions suggested was to enhance the awareness and capacity of seed producers and supporting partners. ISSD organized trainings for major partners and seed producers in field inspection, sample collection and laboratory testing, seed production and post harvest handling in major crops (wheat, teff, maize potato) and seed law. In addition to the training, experience sharing visits have been organized by ISSD Amhara to Oromiya Region to visit the working of quality regulatory authority and its line branches. The team has visited parental lines and seed laboratories to enhance their capacity in quality seed testing and inspection. Moreover, experience sharing visit was carried out within Amhara region to share best experiences among cooperatives and private seed producers.

2. Supporting Internal quality control

The other action was strengthening internal quality control of seed producers. The SPCs were assisted to establish internal quality controlling committees and the committee members were trained on the importance of quality seed production, quality control mechanisms and clustering. Besides, technical seed production manuals were prepared in local language and distributed to seed producers. Seed producers were also encouraged and supported to employ professional staff for this function. Moreover, mini laboratories are established in some seed producers through ISSD co-grant and by seed producers themselves to improve internal quality controlling activities.

3. Facilitating External quality control

With the initiative and help of ISSD, an independent seed regulatory authority has been established replacing the Quarantine Department under BoA. This establishment has given power and capacity to the authority not only just to control but also to provide additional services and advisory. The authority has begun to control seed quality at all levels of the seed classes including those of the research centers.
Seed quality now

The different interventions made by ISSD in collaboration with different partners to improve seed quality have brought up positive far reaching changes on the sector over the years.

The continuous awareness created on partners and seed producers about the uncompromising importance of seed quality has increased crop productivity and strengthened the linkage between seed producers and partners and created conducive policy environment to develop the seed sector.

Moreover, the established independent seed regulatory body is executing its professional mandate better than before. Quality testing procedures are improved i.e. unlike to the previous experience, sample for laboratory test is also taken from cleaned and packed seed to check the quality of seed distributed to the final consumers.

Due to the capacity building and knowledge sharing activities, producers’ awareness of seed quality has increased. Seed producers have developed clear internal seed quality control procedures as well as their skills and knowledge in internal quality control mechanisms have improved. Both the internal and external seed quality control systems have shown improvements as a result rate of seed rejection has decreased (basically due to the establishment of quality controlling committee, clustering, establishment of internal mini laboratories and processing facilities). For that matter, the attention given to quality seed by all stakeholders has grown.

Besides, due to the start of direct seed marketing, accountability for quality seed is in place (hence, producers re-cleaned seed to increase quality and market efficiency), competition by the quality of the seed increased (due to the competitive pricing system), farmers gave attention to quality seed, customers’ satisfaction has increased (complain of farmers decreased, confidence developed, amount of seed used and crop portfolio has increased).

General trend shows, amount of seed produced has increased from year to year, productivity enhanced, and timely seed supply showed improvement.

What is next?

To continue improving seed quality, the focus on capacity development (the soft and hard) of the seed sector actors need to be strengthen.

From ISSD’s experience and study recommendations, the achievements discussed above need to be taken as a positive starting point or springboard to take better and wider steps.

Still, increasing the skills and knowledge of seed producers and partners in seed quality production and post harvest handling on major seed crops in all agro-ecologies and to all concerned expertise and decision makers at all levels is essential. Increasing awareness on seed laws and regulations to all seed value chain actors and legislative bodies remains as an essential step to enforce the seed laws and regulations.

At seed producers level, increasing the number of professionals in their organizations, strengthening internal laboratories, participating in the production of pre basic and basic seed, building standardized stores, installing processing facilities and supporting these activities by supporting organizations is a future task ahead.

In addition, the seed regulatory authority should be more autonomous for better service provision and improved accountability. Establishing new laboratories/opening new branches to provide the service to a wider areas including moisture stress ones and fulfilling laboratory materials and facilities in these laboratories are unfinished home works.

Finally, to address seed quality an integrated seed quality system should be designed in the region in order to improve the seed quality by all actors involved in the seed sector.
Dear Guests and Participants:

Please allow me to present my view about the contribution of ISSD in the development of the seed sector of our region - Amhara.

Amhara region is the second largest region next to Oromia. It has a population of about 20 million. Currently it has about 4.5 million cultivated land. About 1.2 million certified seed is required to cover this cultivable land by major crops and yet we could supply only about 200,000 quintals of certified seed to the rural farmers.

To alleviate this problem we planned to supply 700,000 quintals of certified. The regional government is trying to improve the capacity of the sector together with different stakeholders like research, public and private seed producers, universities, cooperatives, and different projects among which ISSD project is the main stakeholder.

I can say ISSD is a successful project in our region. With ISSD, we have a number of success stories, and the secret behind the success is the approach used. Unlike many other projects, ISSD is not a framed project in its planning and implementation of activities. ISSD allows us (all stakeholders) to identify, prioritize and take action based on our regional context, and there is no pre-defined activity designed by the project. The programme facilitates in creating platform and bringing together all stakeholders. The regional seed core group, which I am chairing, is a platform composed of selected relevant key offices working on the seed value chain. All sectors are represented and we design activity and monitor its progresses closely. This has helped us not only to implement the policy targets set out by the government but also to improve and refine it further when obstacles arise. Since we identified, prioritized and implemented activity, we always feel that it is just our plan and thus accordingly implement it. This approach makes ISSD a unique project.

Looking back to the time when we started, initially we were focusing on fixing the existing system of doing things. But gradually, we started thinking to try different things to find solutions for the challenges we have been facing in the seed sector. One good example is that we have developed a system where companies can sell seed on their own, which was not there before. I remember, when we start seed marketing in 2011, we selected only four companies that have better capacity, so that one company sells seed in one Woreda, because we feared that they can’t do it. But now all seed companies in our region are selling seed on their own, and one company sells in different woredas competing with other companies depending on the amount of seed it has and its interest. This year, 2015, we have implemented DSM in 23 high maize and wheat producing woredas and 68% of the hybrid maize seed in our region was sold through DSM. By doing that we have solved late delivery of seed, improved seed quality because of accountability, reduced seed leftover significantly, and reduced work burden from government staff at different levels.

Similarly, the idea of establishing an authority that regulates seed quality, was discussed initially in the core group as a solution to overcome the quality problem of seed in our region. We have seen the experience of other countries in terms of seed regulation, which helped us to think as a different option for quality improvement, than thinking only to work within the bureau of agriculture. The discussion matured to the level that we established a regulatory authority, not only for seed but also for other agricultural inputs. Although infant, we have started observing its professional contribution to the seed quality improvement.
ISSD has started Local Seed Business (LSB) since its inception and gradually brought up many cooperatives to the level that they can be considered as a seed business unit. Initially there were only 8 LSBs in the region and now there are about 70 LSBs that produce seed and some of them have competence certificate like other seed companies. These cooperatives are in different part of the region, also producing different crops that are not the interest of seed companies for different reasons. That shows the potential of seed producers’ cooperatives, if managed properly, to supply quality seed to a wide range of agro-ecologies. Learning from this, we have now included, although by different name (Community Based Seed Producers’ Cooperative) in our GTP II. In GTP II, seed producers’ cooperatives are planned to be one of the major sources of seed to attain crop production target.

ISSD focuses on system thinking and technical capacity development, and these are logically expected from Universities—in our case Bahir Dar University. The program has provided trainings to stakeholders to fill gaps that motivated seed producer cooperatives in particular to be professional in seed production and supply. In this regard, we feel ISSD is filling our holes. As a government, we require the support of universities in research and innovations. In general, ISSD works on system development and now cooperatives are part of seed production system, which were not there before.

In our region we call ISSD a unique project mainly because of its approach and impact. ISSD is very small project. But because it used very strategic approach of empowering all stakeholders and focused on changing the system with stakeholders, than giving a recommendation, it has brought observable changes compared to many other bigger projects, which always give us targets to achieve. I hope in the new phase, ISSD will strengthen its approach and support us better to attain GTP II targets. At the end of GTP II (2020) Amhara region planned to use 707, 370 Qt of quality seed, which is a 327% increment from what we are using now. Meeting this target requires coordination and continuation of ISSD initiated projects, with possible new ones, with all key partners and stakeholders. The renewal of the project has coincided, with the start of GTP II. As a government we would like to use this opportunity to attain our GTP II targets.

Finally I would like to thank the Netherlands government and people for their generous technical and financial support with this project.

I thank you!

Other Testimonials and views for ISSD Amhara

**ISSD is not like other projects**

“Particularly now, we are at a critical time because unless we increase the use of seed it is difficult to increase productivity any more. We have achieved maize productivity at 33qt/hectare. (National average is 32 while in W/Gojjam is 39 quintals per hectare). To increase this 33 quintal to 34 quintal at regional level, we need to increase the use of seed. Otherwise increasing even one percent would be an upward task. Hence, it is here that ISSD can help focusing on strategic issues of the seed sector involving both private and public seed enterprises. I think that is why BDU is leading this project. If that wasn’t the case, it would have been like other projects under BoA or somewhere else.”

Dr. Teshome Walle, Head Amhara BoA (December 2014, Dangla)

**ISSD is game changer**

“For us, ISSD is a project that enabled us to do tangible work at grassroots with small cash. It also changed our views towards projects - with very small investment; it is possible to bring meaningful community change.”

Dr. Simachew Gashaye, Vice President of D/Markos University
ISSD is doing half of the yield requirement

“For any yield there are three very important factors: genetics, environment and management. When we talk about genetics, we are talking about seed. The quality of the seed determines about 40 percent of the total yield. Therefore, what ISSD is doing is at least half of the yield requirement. Therefore, these activities should be strengthened and as I have seen it today, the activities which are done for the last four years were very good and hence should be strengthened.

What could be improved?

“As a matter of fact, projects are just teachers. They show how things should be done. And it is up to other institutions to learn from that and scale it up. So what ISSD is doing is really good and should be continued. However, I would suggest involving more stakeholders in workshops, field visits and dialogues.

ISSD most successful project in our University

“ISSD in our University is the most known project for its significant results. Apart from organizing and capacitating SPCs, we have successfully introduced new Tef (Dukem) and potato (Belete) varieties in two woredas that farmers are greatly benefiting from. Hence, when ISSD Ethiopia was in transition this year and we had no strong contacts, our University had allocated more than 100 thousand Birr to continue the projects activities.”

Daniel Tadesse, ISSD focal person, University of Gonder

ISSD changed our lives

“We started seed business with the help of ISSD BDU. ISSD initiated and capacitated us to work on seed multiplication to increase our income. Our members’ livelihood is changed now. We can send children to school, we have mobile phones, tin roofed and solar powered houses, and even some of us have houses in the town.

Yenesew Chanie, Kudmi SPC chairman, Mecha Woreda

ISSD fills gaps

ISSD played significant roles in filling policy, knowledge and attitude gaps and capacities in the seed sector in the region.

Desalege Tadele, Jema Agrotech P.L.C, Owner and Manager

ISSD will do and achieve a lot more

“I am new to ISSD and to the field of seed. But since I am from a farmer family, I know very well the importance of seed in agriculture. As Institutional Advisor to ISSD project now, I am learning a lot about the project as I have to make important decisions. The project has accomplished a lot of good results. In the current phase, I hope we will do a lot more.

Dr. Mulunesh Abebe, ISSD Institutional Advisor and Vice President for Research and Community Services, Bahir Dar University
Overview of
BENEFIT-ISSD Ethiopia (2016-2019)

1. BENEFIT
Bilateral Ethiopian Netherlands Effort for Food, Income and Trade (BENEFIT) is a partnership organization of four projects:
1. Integrated Seed Sector Development in Ethiopia (ISSD Ethiopia)
2. Capacity building for Scaling up of evidence-based best Practices in agricultural production (CASCAPE)
3. Ethiopian-Netherlands Trade Facility for Agribusiness (TAG)
4. Sesame Business Network support project (SBN)

The BENEFIT Partnership aims for improved sustainable food, income and trade among rural households in Ethiopia. Its goal includes:
- Increased quantity and quality of sustainable agricultural production;
- Improved markets and trade; and
- Strengthened enabling institutional environment for the agricultural sector.
- Projects which are facilitated by the BENEFIT Partnership Coordination Unit are more effective, achieve higher scale and impact, and demonstrate improved stakeholder collaboration

2. BENEFIT-ISSD Ethiopia

The Integrated Seed Sector Development project in Ethiopia (ISSD Ethiopia) is implemented under the umbrella of the Bilateral Ethiopian Netherlands Effort for Food, Income and Trade Partnership (BENEFIT Partnership). The project goal is to improve female and male smallholder farmer access to and use of quality seed of new, improved, and/or farmer preferred varieties to sustainably increase agricultural productivity.

ISSD is an inclusive approach that recognizes and builds upon a diversity of seed systems. ISSD recognizes the relevance of informal and formal seed systems, as well as the complementary roles of the private and public sectors. The ISSD approach promotes entrepreneurship and market orientation, and facilitates the development and implementation of enabling and evolving policies, for establishing a dynamic seed sector. Building upon a diversity of seed systems, interventions guided by ISSD foster pluralism in the interests of food and nutritional security and economic development.

2.1 Partners in ISSD Ethiopia
The project is a joint effort of Bahir Dar University, Haramaya University, Hawassa University, Mekelle University, Oromia Seed Enterprise, the Ethiopian Seed Association and Centre for Development Innovation of Wageningen UR. Bahir Dar University implements the project in Amhara region. Partners include governmental organizations at federal, regional and local level, non-governmental organizations, development organizations, and seed businesses operating at different scales. The project is funded by the Directorate General for International Cooperation through the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Addis Ababa.

2.1 Components of ISSD Ethiopia

ISSD Ethiopia supports farmers and farmer groups to improve seed management practices in informal seed systems. In Amhara region 10 farmer groups in six Woredas are being established and supported. In intermediary seed systems it assists seed producer cooperatives in taking seed production up as local businesses. 31 LSBs are being supported directly and indirectly under Amhara programme. The project strengthens the capacities of small, medium, and national seed enterprises to produce and market quality seed in formal seed systems. ISSD Amhara directly supports 5 small and medium private seed producers. ISSD Ethiopia also addresses seed value chain bottlenecks across these seed systems and works to improve the enabling environment throughout the entire seed sector. Currently three crops’ SVCs are being studied in the region. The project puts strong emphasis on strengthening the capacities of seed professionals.

For more information, please visit our websites: www.issdbdu.wordpress.com or www.issdethiopia.org
Regional Updates

BENEFIT ISSD introduced to partners

ISSD Amhara introduced BENEFIT-ISSD Ethiopian new phase (2016-2019) to partners and seed producers and jointly planned the 2016 activities on a two day workshop organized from 9-10 July 2016 at Finote Selam.

The workshop was also aimed at consolidating the achievements and lessons learnt of the previous phase (2012-2015). On the workshop, ISSD Amhara presented the achievements and lessons learnt, the challenges of the seed sector in Amhara region and the new BENEFIT-ISSD program components and focus areas under the BENEFIT Partnership.

Regional Seed Core Group meeting

The Amhara Region Seed Core Group (SCG) held its first meeting on the 14th of July 2016 since the new BENEFIT-ISSD phase (2016-2019) started. The SCG discussed on key seed sector achievements and challenges including reorganization of the SCG and seed value chain studies.

Opening the meeting, the chairman, Ato Melkie Tadesse, D/Head of BoA said, “We are at our second year of the GTPII programme and our performance on seed use in the region needs to be strengthen further. ISSD Ethiopia’s support in this regard has been key and we will strengthen our efforts to meet the target we set.”

On the meeting, ISSD Amhara presented the achievements so far of the project and the challenges of the region’s seed sector as prioritized by the regional partners at the regional workshop in October 2015. ISSD also briefed the SCG about the new BENEFIT ISSD project, selections of LSBs, partners and private seed producers that will be directly supported under the new programme.

Finally, the SCG discussed and approved two prioritized crops (potato and maize) that ISSD Amhara proposed for study of their seed value chains.

ISSD Amhara ongoing studies

BENEFIT-ISSD Amhara is currently undertaking studies aimed at identifying real bottlenecks of the different seed systems in Amhara region. In the intermediary and formal seed systems, the seed value chains of potato and maize is being studied. The two studies are expected to show the major challenges across the seed value chains of the two crops. In addition, potato mini tuber production feasibility study is also underway side by side to the potato SVC study.

In the informal seed system, three different baseline studies that aimed at understanding the informal seed exchange network, informal market and identify crop portfolios in intervention areas are underway. As ISSD is now embarking in supporting the informal seed system, these studies will provide the necessary data and knowledge about the functioning of the system for action.

Improving seed marketing

......continued from page 5

seed marketing, it still requires additional interventions in order to boost seed marketing activities of the region further.

Additional interventions on facilitating access to finance for seed producers, supporting seed growers to offer more attention to produce diversified crops/varieties, promoting private dealers, improving market facility services, encouraging use of post-harvest technologies and supporting seed producers to be market oriented is essential.

Besides, scaling up of DSM on major crops for different ecological zones, improving price fixation strategy especially for cooperatives involved in contractual seed marketing, increasing quality control mechanisms and providing more attention for small scale seed producers helps the sector to be more vibrant.

About ISSD: The programme on Integrated Seed Sector Development in Ethiopia aims to strengthen the development of a vibrant, market oriented and pluralistic seed sector in the country. Through a vibrant and pluralistic seed sector, quality seed of superior varieties are available and affordable to a larger number of farmers, thereby contributing to agriculture for food security and economic development in Ethiopia.

For more information:

www.issdbdu.wordpress.com
www.issdethiopia.org
www.facebook.com/issdamhara

Email: bduissd@gmail.com or aderawg@yahoo.com
Tel: 0911981271