

Report on Africa RISING strategic and operational Innovation Platform establishment workshops in Bosona Worena, Endamakoni, Lemo and Sinana woredas, Ethiopia

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April 2014 www.africa-rising.net







The Africa Research In Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) program comprises three research-for-development projects supported by the United States Agency for International Development as part of the U.S. government's Feed the Future initiative.

Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three regional projects are led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa) and the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads the program's monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. http://africa-rising.net/







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This document was made possible with support from the American people delivered through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as part of the US Government's Feed the Future Initiative. The contents are the responsibility of the producing organization and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of USAID or the U.S. Government.

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#### **Objectives**

The field trip was organized to reach for two important objectives;

- Establish four strategic (woreda level) and eight operational (kebele level) Innovation Platforms (IPs) in all Africa RISING Ethiopia project sites (Basona Worena in Amhara, Endamehoni in Tigray, Lemo in SNNPR and Sinana in Oromia).
- To give partners an overview of Africa RISING project activities to date and what future research-for-development activities are envisaged mainly through the innovation platforms

#### Discussion, observations and insights

All workshops started with self-introductions of participants and expression of their expectations from the workshop. Most of the expectations were about understanding what Africa RISING has done so far; what innovation platforms are; what partners' roles will be in the Innovation platforms and future planned activities.

An opening speech was made by higher officials from the zonal and woreda administrations. The officials emphasized how African RISING project objectives complement government agricultural development strategies particularly on scaling up and out of good practices that could come from Africa RISING and the need for collaboration with NGOs and research organizations to transform the life of the rural poor. They also expressed their commitment to work in collaboration with the different partners working in the project.

Participants included representatives of government offices, NGOs, universities, agricultural research centers and different public and private sector organizations. A number of ideas were shared on the status of Africa RISING project activities, possible partnerships and the role of innovation platforms in joint planning, implementation and learning. Different kebele institutions, development agents (DAs), model farmers, cooperatives, micro-finance institutions and elders/religious leader were among the participant at the kebele level.

### Summary of activities and participatory community analysis result

Kindu Mekonnen gave an overview of the project objective, purpose and intervention areas and illustrated what sustainable intensification means and what it is trying to achieve. He explained how Africa RISING objectives of food and nutrition security, and income diversifications are in line with the government's goal of improving the livelihood of small holder farmers.

Going through the project activities done so far, it was explained that a quick diagnostic study was conducted through telephone survey which was followed by livelihood survey using SLATE tool on 480 farmers to generate baseline information. A Participatory Community analysis was also done with 300 farmers to characterize farmers and have a profound understanding of the opportunities and challenges of the farming systems in the research sites.

The completed and ongoing Africa RISING project activities include:

- Telephone surveys
- Livelihood surveys using SLATE
- Participatory community analysis (PCA)
- Studies on legume crop residues-FEAST-TECHFIT
- IMPACTlite surveys: Household detailed characterization
- Surveys on agro-ecological knowledge and community knowledge groups
- Market value chain studies to identify dominate commodities and proposed interventions
- On-farm research demonstrations
- Crop and soil based fertilizer trials

He gave a generic review of the seven Africa RISING research thematic areas and international, national and local partners that are working on the project. He emphasized the importance of collaboration among partners and acknowledged all partners but mainly universities for offering site coordination offices and highlighted Africa RISING effort in recruiting site coordinators, signing memorandum of understanding with partners and providing car and motor bike at the project sites for better facilitation and coordination of the project activities.

A summary of the PCA result was translated into local languages and distributed to the kebele participants while a brief power point presentation of the PCA was made. Farmers' profiles, livelihood sources, institutions existing inside and outside the sites, the major crops and crop/livestock preferences (cash and food) among male, female and youth categories was presented from the detailed the PCA document (Participatory Community Analysis). Possible interventions to the diagnosed problems in crop and livestock subsystems that were identified with farmers and exhaustively listed on the PCA document were then discussed.

Some questions and comments from participants included:

- A woreda agricultural office head in Basona Worena explained that watershed
  management is a major problem in the area and asked if Africa RISING gave enough
  attention to the issue in its research thematic areas. It was mentioned that one of Africa
  RISING thematic research area is "improved land and water management" which
  includes different research activities around natural resource management area.
- A university representative in Endamakoni asked if the research thematic areas were identified with farmers' participation. It was discussed the research thematic areas were done based on the preliminary diagnosis made by the project but it is still open to include another farmers priorities through the IPs at different levels.
- A government representative in Lemo asked what AR has done or is planning to do on *Enset* disease (bacteria wilt). Kindu Mekonnen said that Africa RISING is trying to link with a PhD student to do a preliminary assessment of the depth of the problem. An Areka Agricultural Research Center (ARC) representative added that their center is working with different partners to introduce disease resistant *Enset* varieties and other sanitary methods and that Africa RISING brings a good opportunity to work in collaboration with other stakeholders to tackle the problem. Another government representative reflected that the previous attempts by different actors on the disease didn't bring much change and if there is any work planned by AR it should be practical and result oriented unlike previous ones. A university representative said *Enset* productivity is declining over time as it is laborious and the new generation is becoming less interested to work on it so the platform can work in introducing mechanical equipment to help process *Enset*.
- A government representative in Sinana appreciated Africa RISING taking nutrition as a
  cross cutting issue as food security is becoming better and better in the country but
  nutrition security is still an issues. Another representative emphasized the importance
  of considering gender in the project; which is already an important cross cutting team
  for Africa RISING.

#### Report from on-farm trials and demonstrations

Africa RISING and CIP site coordinators and a university researcher (in Sinana) reported the main objectives of the field trial and the major activities conducted on the field demonstration on Wheat, Faba bean and Potato. The methodology of the demonstration was illustrated including the varieties used, seed rates, spacing, methods of planting, fertilizer rates, weed and pest management for all the three major crops in the research sites. Mid-season evaluation was done after the field trial with the objective of identifying and ranking the different varieties across different parameters of measurement like resistance to disease, early maturity, stand vigor and easy adaptation by male and female farmers and youth categories. When the crops reached maturity end-season evaluation was also conducted in similar fashion with the mid-season evaluation with consideration of other yield and yield related parameters.

Inclusion of a new variety and working to have a clear ranking and preference on Faba bean was mentioned as important points by participants in Bosona Worena and Sinana woredas. Some woreda agricultural office representatives raised the importance of working on crop diseases as it has stayed as a major challenge for production and productivity and pinpointed the importance of bringing a tangible result so that the woreda will be intensively work on scaling up and out of the good outcomes of the project.

#### Building partnerships and value chains

A presentation was made on the nature of partnerships, representation, and envisaged functions at strategic and operational level IPs and innovation clusters. The presentation emphasized the importance of horizontally and vertically linking the different IPs and clusters to ensure learning and collaboration. The importance of different partner engagement was highly emphasized to realize effective collaboration, joint learning and impact. An example of commodity based value chains with actors and roles was also presented on the major crops and livestock/livestock products to give a picture of the typical value chain in the research sites. A preliminary assessment of the value chain on dominant crops and livestock/livestock products/ in the area was shared.

#### Gender perspectives

A presentation was made on "gender" and the importance of its integration in agriculture in general and Africa RISING activities in particular. Accordingly, gender refers to socially constructed roles and responsibilities of men and women mentioning the lesser roles women are given in agriculture. The presenters stressed that one of the difficulties for having a sustainable change in agriculture is lack of systematically incorporating or addressing gender issues in interventions. Unequal access to assets, resources and services, credit and other key inputs or education are mentioned as major issues that affect equitable benefits between men and women. Power dynamics between male and females is also an important point raised that needs to be considered in mainstreaming gender in interventions. Finally, the implications of

considering gender in Africa RISING research activities were explained to insure equitable and sustainable change in farmers' livelihood.

### Innovation Platforms - purpose, functions, membership

After showing a digital story on innovation platforms, Zelalem Lema kicked-off his presentations by asking if anyone had participated or knew anything about IPs. It was explained that IPs are learning platforms where different stakeholders come together to deal with common problems or opportunities. It was highlighted that IPs are becoming very instrumental to deal with complex development problems as solutions to such problems need the collaboration and participation of different actors. It is also a networking and capacity building platform for different actors around a particular system of focus.

Strategic and operational IPs are the two types of platforms that will be established by Africa RISING with the objective of giving strategic direction at the woreda level IPs and their practical implementation at the kebele level (operational IPs). Three stages were listed from International Livestock Research Institute's (ILRI's) experience on how to establish IP:

- Engaging with stakeholders and establishing IPs
- Mobilization, Planning, Implementation, Learning and Assessing
- Ensuring Sustainability

Potential members and functions of the strategic IPs are also depicted based on the previously listed partners at IP training workshop at ILRI campus. Participants were very keen to the IP approach and expressed its potential in dealing with complex problems then discussed on possible IP members, purpose and functions already identified in the previously at ILRI campus.

#### Monitoring and evaluation framework

A short presentation was made at Lemo and Sinana on the rationale of integrating an M&E framework at different levels of the IPs and what possible roles and responsibilities partners will have in the process. A plan was discussed to share a draft M&E framework with IP technical group members and get a feedback on it before discussing it in detail in a planned learning event at ILRI campus in late May or early June.

Farmers emphasized problems related to feed shortage saying there is indeed a serious scarcity where they only use crop residues as the primary feed source and there has never been any initiative to alleviate feed problem in their kebele. Only a few of them have recently started cultivating some grass species like Desho, Rhodus, Sesbania and Oats but only in small amounts.

A SeedFeed project representative gave a brief of the project and how they plan to pilot fodder interventions in collaboration with Africa RISING to promote commercial feed seed production. The expert stressed that animal feed shortage is one of the most important challenges in the

whole country affecting the productivity of the livestock sector. Many commercial initiatives in Ethiopia have produced industrial animal feed but could not reach the farm-gate level. The project aims to work on commercialization of feed seed giving better access to feed at the farm-gate and potentially growing them into seed business and commercialization. The project wants to work with interested farmers as a pilot project on feed seed production, marketing and business development to generate evidence for a bigger scale adoption of animal feed related innovations. Wachamo University also showed interest to work with the project as they have already started dealing with animal feed shortage which has been a challenge to the recent estrus synchronization campaign of the government. Areka Research center representative also showed their interest as they have a problem to distribute viable feed seed which is tarnishing their reputation around farmers.

#### Key decisions and outcomes of the workshops

One of the most important deliverable of these workshops was the establishment of "Innovation Platforms". A total of twelve platforms; four at the woreda level and eight at the kebele level were established in all Africa RISING research sites.

Participants went through an interesting discussion to identify institutions and individuals that would be represented in the general assembly and technical committee of the IPs. The meeting places were also decided to be by rotation across the sites so that different partner institutions show their commitment by organizing meetings at their venues. Second, the partnership and networking among the members will be enhanced if IP meetings are organized by the different partners. The IP technical group members for the four woredas and eight kebeles are listed below, with members ranging from 7-10. The total list of IP members is annexed at the end of this report.

Table 1. List of Basona Worena woreda technical committee members

Full name	Organization	Role
Shewangizaw	Basona Worena woreda office of agriculture (WOA)	Chairman
Negussie		
Temesgen Alene	ILRI- Africa RISING	Secretary
Amhayesus Belete	Debre Birhan University (DBU)	Facilitator
Abiro Tigabie	Debre Birhan Agricultural Research Center (DBARC)	Member
Tegene Seifu	WOA - AGP focal person	Member
Jemal Mohammed	WOA - SLM focal person	Member
Bekele Demssie	BasonaW. woreda women, children & youth affairs	Member
Silesih Aynekulu	SUSARMA	Member

Local Name for the IP - "Yeauket Shigeger ena Mikikir Medrek" Number of IP meetings - Four times per year including one field day event Meeting place - It was agreed to meet in rotation at different venues in research center, University, woreda office of agriculture and zone office of agriculture.

Table2. List of Gudo Beret kebele (Bosona Worena woreda) technical committee members

Full name	Organization	Role
Engdasew Abebe	Gudo Beret kebele office of agriculture	Chairman
Kidanu Gebrehana	Gudo Beret kebele land management &	Secretary
	administration office	
Eshete Kebede	Gudo Beret kebele office of agriculture	Facilitator
Genet Mengistu	Gudo Beret kebele office of agriculture	Member
Mulu Habtie	Gudo Beret kebele health office	Member

Participants of Gudo Beret kebele operational innovation platform agreed to have a meeting three times per year (Every 4 months). They also agreed to have two field visit program per year.

Table 3. List of Goshe Bado kebele (Bosona Worena woreda) technical committee members

Name	Organization	Role
Sibsibe Sahile	Goshe Bado kebele office of agriculture	Chairman
Eyesusalem T/tasadik	Goshe Bado kebele land management & administration office	Secretary
Desalegn Haile	Goshe Bado kebele office of agriculture	Facilitator
*	Goshe Bado kebele office of agriculture	Member
Asebu G/Egziabiher	Goshe Bado kebele health office	Member
*	Goshe Bado kebele cooperative expert	Member

<sup>\*</sup> Crop DA and Cooperative expert are vacant position and will be a member when they are appointed

Table 4. List of Maichew/Endemokoni woreda technical committee members

Members	Representative	Role
Woreda Office of Agriculture-Extension	Haftom/Hagos	Chair person
AR site coordinator	Mohammed Ibrahim	Secretory
Maichew TVET College	Getachew	Facilitator
AGP focal person	Abera	Member
EIAR center in Michew	Belay	Member
Alamata Research Center	Hamet/Hagos	Member
TARI	Tesfaye	Member
Mekelle University	Dawit/Sehin	Member
CIP	Gebrehiwot	Member
GRAD (Local NGO)	Haftay	Member

Local Name for the IP - "Learning and action Platform"

Number of IP meeting - Three times per year with one field day event

Meeting place - It will be hosted by TG member institutions

Table 5. Embahasti kebele (Endemokoni woreda) innovation platform members

Members	Organization	Role
Birhanugebre Kiros	kebele agriculture office	Chairman and facilitator
Getahun Haddiss	kebele manager	Secretary
Abraha Tadese	kebele education	Member
Ashena Fihagos	kebele GRAD representative	Member
Bayraw Kiros	kebele administration	Member
Gabu Hagos	kebele women representative	Member
Awotash	kebele health representative	Member

Table 6. Embahasti kebele (Endemokoni woreda) innovation platform members

Name	Organization	Role
Gubena Reda	Tsibet kebele NRM DAs	Facilitator
Birhan Hagazi	Tsibet kebele livestock DA	Member
Azmera Teka	Stibet kebele crop and irrigation DA	Member
Hayelom Gidey	Social Affairs representatives	Member
Gebere kebede	Tsibet kebele Manager	Secretary
Birhanu haftu	Tsibet Water resources representatives	Member
Meresa Hayle	Tsibet kebele coopereatives Office	Member
Tadese kiros	Tsibet kebele Admenstration	Chairman

Table 7. List of Lemo woreda technical committee members

Members	Representative	Role
Lemo woreda office of Agriculture (HAB project expert)	Belay Osere	Facilitator
Lemo woreda office of Agriculture (Livestock expert)	Lobe Haile	Member
Lemo woreda office of Agriculture (Crop expert)	Tamrat Erjinaw	Member
Areka and Worabe Agricultural research Center	Shemelis Mengistu; Fikadu Tessema	Member
Wachamo University	Ashenafi Yohaness (Research and Community Service Director)	Chair person
Lemo Africa RISING coordination office	Africa RISING site coordinator (Workneh)	Secretary
Local NGO representative (SOS)	Admasu Belayneh	Member

A local name was given to the innovation platform in local language (Hadiya) written as "Selleme" strategic Innovation platform. Four times annual meeting of the IP was agreed by participants. Meeting was agreed to be hosted by IP TG institutions in rotation.

Table 8. List of Jawe kebele (lemo woreda) IP TG members

Table 6. List of sawe Rebele (lettle Woreda) if To Hembers			
Members	Representative	Role	
DA NRM	Mulugeta Negash		
DA Crop	Mulatu Basha	Secretary	
DA livestock	Birtukan Bizuneh	Member	
Omo credit	Ayele Abebe	Facilitator	
Gender Office	Bekelech Belachew	Member	
Crop expert	Birtukan Shigute	Member	
kebele Manager	Meles shobiso	Chairman	

Number of Meeting - four times a year for the IP meeting; Meeting place - At the kebele administration office (in rotation)

Table 9. List of Upper Gana (Lemo woreda) technical committee members

Members	Organization	Role
Demek Beyene	Crop extension worker	Chairman
Ebrahim Juhar	NRM- extension worker	Secretary
Workneh Dubale	AR Site coordinator	Facilitator
Cherent Girma	representative of youth affair	Member
Alemu Ashuro	kebele administrator	Member
Shega Matebe	Health extension worker	Member
Asefa Beyago	Livestock extension worker	Member
Abera Hechiso	Development Agent	Member

Table 10. List of Sinana woreda technical committee members

Members	organization	Role
Debele Habebe	Sinana woreda office of Agriculture (AGP focal person and	Facilitator
	extension team leader)	
Eshetu Adugna	Sinana woreda office of Agriculture (Livestock expert)	Member
Werklign Asseffa	woreda office of Agriculture (Crop expert)	Member
Shure Seboka	Sinana Agricultural research Center (Extension)	Member
Abdulnasir Yunus	Wadawalabu University	Chair person
Addisu Asfaw	Sinana woreda AR coordination office	Secretary
Tesfaye Bekele	Local NGO representative (HUNDEE)	Member

Local name to the innovation platform - "Seleme" learning and action platform" Number of meetings per year - Four times per year

Table 11. List of Ilu-Sanbitu kebele (Sinana woreda) technical committee members

IPTG Members	Organization	Role
Kelil Ahmed	Ilu-Sanbitu kebele administrator	Chairman
Mohammed Amano	Sanbitu Primary Cooperative (DA-Coop.)	Secretary
Tigist Teshome	Ilu-Sanbitu kebele office of Agriculture (DA-NRM)	Facilitator
Abebe Gonfa	Ilu-Sanbitu kebele office of Agriculture (DA-Crop)	Member
Birtuka Tadese	Ilu-Sanbitu kebele office of Agriculture (DA-Crop)	Member
Daniel Assefa	Ilu-Sanbitu kebele Livestock Agency (DA-Vet)	Member
Belaynesh Dinku	Ilu-Sanbitu kebele Chairman	Member

Table 12. List of Salka kebele (Sinana woreda) technical committee members

IPTG Members	Organization	Role
Haji Hisein	Salka kebele Administration (Head)	Chairman
Genet Kebede	Salka kebele health extension (head)	Secretary
Abdulkerim Abdulmenan	Salka kebele primary cooperative (DA)	Facilitator
Esayas Aklilu	Salka kebele livestock agency (DA)	Member
Tayba Mohammad	Salka kebele Women and children office head	Member
Husein Abdi	Salka kebele youth and sport affair (head)	Member
Debebe Taddesse	SEFISA seed producers cooperative head	Member
Bereka Hordofa	Salka kebele primary cooperative (head)	Member
Muhedin Kedir	Salka kebele offive of Agriculture (DA coordinator)	Member

#### Future activities and the way forward

Future activities and meetings are mainly going to be around the research and development thematic areas outlined before, with strengthening IPs to be used as venues for a number of planned activities and to perform better towards achieving project objectives. Innovation Platform members and ILRI IP team discussed and agreed on some important activities that needs to be done in the near future; which includes:

- Establishing four more kebele level innovation platforms by the woreda IP TG in the four research sites (this was executed while the report was organised )
- Identity other value chain actors in both woreda and kebele levels
- Organize a learning event by ILRI IP team around IP facilitation; and monitoring and evaluation
- Identify interested farmers to form groups around certain commodities as innovation clusters and represent them in the kebele IPs
- Contact persons from ILRI IP team for AR sites are Zelalem (Sinana), Aberra (Lemo) and Elias (Basona Worena and Endamekoni woreda)

# Annex 1: List of participants of Basona Worena woreda Strategic Innovation Platform establishment Meeting

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### Annex 2: List of participants of Lemo woreda Strategic Innovation Platform establishment meeting

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Eyool Tadess	H.Zone ARD	
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Gizaw Abdo	Lemo Office of health	
Berhanu Erwaro	Lemo BOA	
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Alemu Oshoro	Lemo BOA	
Meles Shobiso	Jewe/ Manager	
Musse Tamirate	Lemo OFED	
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	WCU - research vice	
Mulatu Osirie	presdent	
Adane Haile(Dr)	WCU - research director	
	WCU - Pubplic service	
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### Annex 3: List of participants of Endamahoni woreda Strategic Innovation Platform establishment meeting

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Getachewkahsy	M	ATVT collage dean		
Goitom Alem	М	Who head		
AtakltiTadle	М	Water and sanitation		
		head		
AshenafiNega	М	Road Authority head		
AlemBlay	F	Women affaire head		
Yemaneh G/Mariam	М	Communicating		
YigzawNguse	М	woreda finance head		
BirihanuHagos	М	Zone agri-office		
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YigzawTadele	М	Land use and		
		Environmental		
		protection		
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Abate mesele	М	woreda union		
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		head		
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		head		
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Birhanu G/kiros	М	Embahasti kebele DA		
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