



Report of the second Sinana woreda strategic innovation platform meeting, 14 December 2014

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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 (FtF) 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 projects are led by the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads an associated project on monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessment.



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# Introduction

Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands is a research for development project that focuses on system interventions in the crop-and-livestock mixed farming system in four large regions (Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and SNNPR). The project understands the need for engaging various research and development partners in addressing system interventions. In order to do this, the project established and has been supporting innovation platforms at field sites. The platforms are meant to facilitate meaningful and effective cooperation and learning interactions that prioritize, guide, and evaluate the research and development processes that are specific to the sites. The platforms started helping connect farmers to profitable and efficient value chains for the main commodities. The members of the platforms are contributing to designing, implementing, evaluating project activities and disseminating and communicating research findings through regular meetings and farmer field days.

## **Innovation platforms and farmer research groups**

**Innovation platforms (IPs) have been formed at all the research sites and strongly link farming communities, the Africa RISING research teams and other public and private actors working in the areas. They work at three levels:**

1. At woreda (district) level, strategic platforms support kebele (sub-district) platforms and farmer research groups. They bring together stakeholders to support wider adoption of innovations.
2. At kebele level, operational platforms oversee local research activities, foster integration among farmer research groups, and promote alignment of local on-farm research with district priorities.
3. Farmer research groups are like *innovation clusters*. They involve all farmers who are active around specific clusters of research activities – such as forage production, water delivery or varietal improvement. The role of these groups is to promote scaling of innovation to wider groups of farmers.

Regular IP meetings are held at strategic and operational level for sharing and communicating research findings. This report aims to share one of the strategic IP meeting that was organized in one of the project site called Sinana woreda, Oromia region. The meeting was organized on the next day of a ‘farmer field day’ where IP members had a chance to visit the research activities accomplished on farmers’ fields.

This second strategic IP meeting was held on 14 December 2014 in Robe, the capital of the woreda. The focus of the meeting was to share the findings of the action research carried out by the Africa RISING research teams in 2014 with local partners, for potential scaling up.

# Meeting report

**Venue:** Robe Teachers College

**Date:** 14 Dec 2014

Participants from CGIAR centers:

- Tilahun Amede (ICRISAT)
- Kalpana Sharma (CIP)
- Aklilu Nigussie (ICRAF)
- Yetsedaw ?? (ICARDA)
- Zelalem Lema (ILRI)
- Elias Damtew (ILRI)
- Apollo Habtamu (ILRI)

**Facilitator:** Amhed Aliyi (Madawalabu University)

**Minute takers:** Zelalem Lema, Abdulnasir, Endeshaw Tadesse, Addisu Asfaw

## Objectives of the meeting:

- The meeting was organized for sharing research findings undertaken in Sinana woreda, collecting feedback and comments and learning generally
- To share roles and responsibilities among platform members for scaling out/up of innovations from last year's interventions by the Africa RISING teams

## Welcome and introduction

Welcome and introduction to the day agenda was undertaken by Addisu Asfaw. In his speech he addressed the purpose of the meeting and pointed out that it is mainly focusing on the communication of research activities that were undertaken by Africa RISING on the ground in Sinana woreda. He also noted the importance of the IP and its function in addressing the issue of sustainable intensification and emphasized the good opportunity for different partners and stakeholders to point out challenge and gaps that were found in the real environment we are working in and to develop solutions all together for better performance. Finally, Addisu encouraged active participation of all IP members to share knowledge and experiences, which contributes to scaling out of innovation.

The learning meeting was officially opened by Abdul Majid Aman (Sinana woreda office of agriculture extension team leader) representing the Zone Agriculture office as chairman of the platform. In his speech he welcomed members of the platform for open discussion and active participation and wished everyone a fruitful discussion.

Ahmed Aliye facilitated the whole meeting. He introducing the agenda for the day and invited participating guests to introduce themselves through 'speed networking'.



*Figure 1: Sinana Woreda Strategic 2nd IP meeting ILRI/Apollo Habtamu*

## Agricultural Growth Program (AGP) potential linkages

A brief remark on the possible potential linkages between the AGP and Africa RISING was given by Debele Habebe, Sinana District AGP focal person. Africa RISING and the AGP are sister projects donated by USAID. The major objective of the AGP is to double the production and productivity of smallholder farmers and reduce poverty through extension and development work. Even though it is a research program, Africa RISING's ultimate goal is also to double production and productivity and reduce poverty. Both are working towards a common goal. Like Africa RISING, the AGP is also focusing on crops, livestock and nutrition. Both are organizing farmers into FRGs on different commodities to support them to learn from each other. According to Debele Habebe, it is a good opportunity to work together to further expand the selected technologies, reach farmers and develop capacity through including many role model farmers.

## Sinana Woreda IP update

Sinana IP activities update was shared by Zelalem Lema. In his presentation he covers the IP structure, function and communication tools designed for better coordination of the platform activities and knowledge sharing. He also addressed the future focus of the IP activities is to improve the livelihood of farmers through scaling up innovations to a wider farmers through partners involved in the platforms. The IP members or stakeholders key roles to be played in the research for development processes from testing of technologies up to scaling up have been mentioned by Zelalem. The presentation focused on the terms of reference developed during the initiation meeting and it covered who are the technical group members and what their role is, the regular meetings that were agreed to be hosted by the four key actors (Sinana Agricultural Research Centre, Madawalabu University, Zone and woreda agricultural offices) in a rotation base.

Workalign Assefa, the woreda IP communication champion, presented ten communication tools identified for the IP. He presented each tools in detail and then demonstrate some of the tools already in use in Sinana. Photo trip report, video clips, IP meetings, farmers' field days and posters were presented among the ten tools.



*Figure 2: Workalign from Sinana Woreda Office of Agriculture and communication champion for the IP - ILRI/Apollo Habtamu*



# Africa RISING research activities in Sinana

The next session looked at:

- reporting progress about the protocols implemented and related research activities undertaken;
- availability of diversified partners and farmers' willingness to participate in many protocols as special opportunities;
- implementing a large number of protocols at a time and shortage of site manpower;
- Incompatibility of farmers' needs and infrastructure with the existing interventions. Particularly the unavailability of roads to connect many farmers and the poor internet connection were presented as great challenges by Addisu Asfaw.

Addisu Asfaw also tried to provide detailed information about the project and mentioned that there were about seven thematic areas identified under the project and more than eight research protocols fully implemented, yielding about **227** total household beneficiaries in the two kebeles. In addition to this, he also stressed the status of research activities, issues related to field visits, capacity development activities and novel result expected from IP members in addressing gaps identified by Africa RISING.

A detailed discussion and reflection about the farmer field day took place, where all participants emphasized the problem of rust. Here are some of their questions:

Q1. What is planned in capacity building of partners especially in terms of logistics to undertake scaling? (Debele Habebe),

Q2. Do the local partners know the Africa RISING project plan? (Debele H.)

Q3. How is monitoring and evaluation of the project being undertaken? (Debele H.)

Q4. How do the different CG centers participating in different research use the budget allocated for them? What is the mode of per-diem payment for DAs? (Debele H.).

A1. Africa RISING project will not be directly involved in scaling, it may assist using site level vehicle and motorbike.

## Technologies identified for scaling up at Sinana?

Sultan Usman (Msc- student of Africa RISING project from Sinana Agricultural Research Centre (SARC) presented the draft Africa RISING site level plan prepared for 2015 to all participating representatives from CG centers, national and local partners. The objective was to get feedback from IP members. Participants had a detailed discussion on selected technologies and management practices for scaling up. They provided very important inputs. Wubshet Alemu, cereals team leader from SARC commented on the candidate wheat varieties presented for participatory varietal selection (Honkolo and Bika varieties). These varieties are highly susceptible to yellow rust. Because both of them were released from Kulumsa Agricultural Research Centers for areas with altitude below 1900m and not for highlands like Sinana (2350 – 2450 masl). Particularly '**Bika**' is released for moisture-stressed areas. He strongly suggested the project not to consider those varieties for scaling

and instead replacing them with more rust-resistant wheat varieties like '*madawalabu*' and '*sofumer*' released from SARC beside '*hidase*'. At the end he noted that there is a need to recommend the right varieties at the right places. Workalign Assefa from the Woreda Bureau of Agriculture requested research institutions to provide full information about the varieties (altitude, soil type, seed rate, etc.) to the office of agriculture before giving to farmers. Dr. Tilahun Amede also suggested IP and FRGs to be incorporated into the scalable management practices with selected technologies.

## Next IP activities: how best CG and IP work together

The group then discussed the future direction of IP activities, particularly developing a research proposal on wheat rust and associated diseases (as proposed by Zelalem Lema). The discussants preferred establishing a research forum as explained below.

Secondly, the next activities of the TGs will include training for farmers participating in different research protocols (e.g. oat and vetch) at both kebeles.

Table 1: Sinana woreda Selka Kebele training requested for each farmers research groups

S. No	Protocols-Treatment Types	Local Name of FRG	FRG members			Training required	TG/IP members and protocol owners who will provide the training
			M	F	T		
1	Tree Lucerne	<i>Sokore (a known local dairy cow breed name)</i>	18	5	23	Pruning and utilization of tree Lucerne, its multi-purpose benefits and planting options	Kindu Mekonnen (ILRI) with Dawit Abate (feed researcher) and Wondemagegn (Forestry researcher) (SARC), Eshetu Adugna (Woreda Livestock fattening expert ), Gonfa (MWU- forestry lecturer)
2	Apple	<i>Ture Badada (apple makes to wait but rewarding)</i>	11	3	14	How to grow apples properly? Pruning, watering and how to produce quality apples for market and diet	Aklilu (ICRAF) and ATo Abiy Astatke (private sector) with Mohamed Beriso (horticulture researcher from SARC), Debele Habebe (Woreda expert and AGP), Abdunansir Yunus and Dejene Nigatu (MWU),
3	Wheat (PVS - 2, CSP 2 and Soil Fertility Treatment 17)	<i>Abdi Waak (Hope with God)</i>	19	2	21	No training need for the time being	
4	Faba been (PVS-2 and CSP-2)	<i>Siko-Mando (Bale and Arsi Oromo ancestor's name)</i>	3	1	4	Post-harvest handling (how to store seeds using triple bag) and its nutritional value...diet consumption, crop rotation for soil fertility improvement and disease and pest control	Researchers from ICARDA with Tadele Tadesse ( Legume Researcher from SARC), Ahmed Aliyi (from MWU), Workalign Assefa (woreda crop expert),
5	Potato (PVS-2and CSP-2)	<i>Ararsa (negotiator)</i>	3	1	4	Post-harvest handling (how to store seeds using DLS) including ware-potato and nutritional value, diet preparation options	Researcher from CIP with Mohamed Beriso (horticulture researcher from SARC), Tesfaye (woreda Irrigation expert), Ahmed Aliyi from MWU
6	Food and Malt Barley	<i>Hangafa Midani (Elder of all crops)</i>	4	0	4	How to produce quality malt-barley and link with market (including input utilization, soil type and post-harvest handling)	Researchers from ICARDA with Shure Soboka ( Crop Researcher from SARC), Ahmed Aliyi (from MWU), Workalign Assefa (woreda crop expert),
7	Oat & vetch	<i>Kenani (rewarding)</i>	13	0	13	How to utilize oat & vetch (eg. mixing vetch with other feeds), at what stage to harvest, how to produce seeds, side effects of vetch	Abera or Melkamu (ILRI) with Dawit Abate (feed researcher) and, Eshetu Adugna (Woreda Livestock fattening expert ), Abdunansir (MWU- NRM lecturer)

Table 2: Sinana Woreda Ilu-Sanbitu Kebele training required for each farmers research groups

S. No	Protocols-Treatment Types	Local Name of FRG	FRG members			Training required	TG/IP members and protocol owners who will provide the training
			M				
1	Soil Fertility Management	<i>Urji (moon lightening in the dark)</i>	26	5	31	Waiting for the research results to be communicated to farmers involved through training	
2	Tree Lucerne	<i>Anole (more milk)</i>	24	9	33	On pruning and utilization of tree Lucerne, its multi-purpose benefits and planting options	Kindu Mekonen (ILRI) with Dawit Abate (feed researcher) and Wondemagegn (Forestry researcher) (SARC), Eshetu Adugna (Woreda Livestock fattening expert ), Gonfa (MWU- forestry lecturer)
3	Apple	<i>Lallisa (ever green)</i>	24	10	34	How to manage Apple to grow properly? Pruning, watering and how to produce quality Apple for market and diet	Aklilu (ICRAF) and ATo Abiy Astatke (private sector) with Mohamed Beriso (horticulture researcher from SARC), Debele Habebe (Woreda expert and AGP), Abdulnasir Yunus and Dejene Nigatu (MWU),
4	Wheat (PVS-2 and CSP-2)	<i>Abdi Bori (hope for tomorrow)</i>	4	0	4	No training required for the time being	
5	Faba-been (PVS-2 and CSP-2)	<i>Abdane (we trust)</i>	4	0	4	Post-harvest handling (how to store seed using _____bag) and its nutritional value...diet consumption, crop rotation for soil fertility improvement and disease and pests control	Researchers from ICARDA with Tadele Tadesse ( Legume Researcher from SARC), Ahmed Aliyi (from MWU), Workalign Assefa (woreda crop expert),
6	Potato (PVS-2 and CSP-2)	<i>Wabi (our security)</i>	4	0	4	Post-harvest handling (how to store seed using DLS) including ware-potato and nutritional value, diet preparation options	Researcher from CIP with Mohamed Beriso (horticulture researcher from SARC), Tesfaye (woreda Irrigation expert), Ahmed Aliyi from MWU
7	Food and Malt Barley	<i>Kenanisa (paying off)</i>	3	1	4	How to produce quality malt-barely and link with market (including input utilization, soil type and post-harvest handling)	Researchers from ICARDA with Shure Soboka ( Crop Researcher from SARC), Ahmed Aliyi (from MWU), Workalign Assefa (woreda crop expert),
8	Oat & vetch	<i>Abdi Rabbi (hope of God)</i>				How to utilize (mixing vetch with other feeds) at what stage to harvest, how to produce seed and its side effect of vetch	Abera or Melkamu (ILRI) with Dawit Abate (feed researcher) and, Eshetu Adugna (Woreda Livestock fattening expert ), Abdulnasir (MWU- NRM lecturer)

## M&E tools

Finally, Elias Damtew (ILRI) and Shure Soboka (M&E champion) presented IP monitoring and evaluation tools to explain how to conduct monitoring and Evaluation of IP activities and collect/document most significant change (MSC) stories using the MSC tool. They also distributed stakeholder interaction tools to the participants and collected feedback.



*Figure 3: Elias Damtew (left) and Shure Saboka (right) presenting M &E tool-ILRI/Apollo Habtamu*

## Future directions

- ❖ The participants agreed that the following interventions must get special attention: crop rotation and intercropping, commodity diversification, utilization of full package, soil fertility testing nutrient recommendation to address the yield gap, and improved livestock feeding habit.
- ❖ As agricultural activities are very complex, creating awareness about resistant varieties of wheat, malt and food barley, potato and faba bean is crucial to overcome the problem of rust and chocolate spot. Revising the Africa RISING policy on integrated disease management must be reconsidered.
- ❖ Agricultural scholars must either collaborate or contribute on their own to solve the challenging agricultural activities by climate change through climate smart agriculture.
- ❖ Since the problem of wheat rust is becoming a global problem, it needs policy intervention. It cannot be solved only by Sinana Woreda IP. Here in Bale, one of the major wheat belts in Ethiopia, it is becoming a serious problem due to the effect of mono-cropping. Hence, all participants agreed on establishing a forum led by Africa RISING (Dr. Kindu Mekonnen and site coordinators) to discuss how to create awareness and minimize the problem of wheat rust and associated diseases. Responsible institutes like CIMMYT and others have to be invited to participate on the discussion.



*Figure 4: A researcher from Sinana Agricultural Research Centre sharing his experience on wheat rust - ILRI/Apollo Habtamu*

## Closing remarks

Finally closing remarks were made by Dr. Tilahun Amede (ICRISAT) and Solomon Faye (Bale zone vice administrator and zone agriculture office head). Dr. Tilahun Amede stressed the Africa RISING approach is special in bringing all partners together in such a way that all member institutions discuss common goals. If it continues in this manner, Africa RISING can provide good experience for other CG centers. Finally Apollo Habtamu made a group photo.



*Figure 5: Tilahun Amede (ICRISAT) making closing remarks - ILRI/Apollo Habtamu*



## Annex 1: Agenda

Time	Activity	Presenter	Facilitator
2:30- 3:00	Registration	All	Endeshaw T
3:00 -3:10	Welcome and Introduction to the Agenda	Addisu Asfaw	Ahmed Aliyi
3:10 -3:20	Opening remarks	Zone/Woreda Representative	
3:20 -3:30	Self-Introduction (Ice-breaker)	All	
3:30-3:45	AGP – potential linkage with Africa RISING	Debele Habebe	
3:45-4:05	Sinana IP update - structure, functions and communication tools	Zelalem Lema and Warkalign Assefa	
4:05-4:25	Africa RISING research activities in Sinana (Update, challenges and opportunities)	Addisu Asfaw	
4:25-4:40	Discussion	All	
4:40-5:00	Tea/Coffee break –group photo	All and Apollo Habtamu	Endeshaw/Apollo H.
5:00-5:45	Which technologies have been selected for scaling up? Discussion with reflections from Farmers field day	Sultan Usman	Ahmed Aliyi
5:45-6:15	Possible next IP activities- how best CG and IP work together	Zelalem Lema	
6:15-6:45	Presentation of M&E tools and discussion and Stakeholder Interaction tool	Shure Soboka and Elias Damtew	
6:45	Closing Remarks	Dr. Tilahun Amede (ICRISAT)	

## Annex 2: Participants

No	Name	Gender	Organization	Role/Responsibility	Telephone	E-mail
1	Shure Seboka	M	Sinana Agricultural Research Centre	Food and soil Researcher and Africa RISING IP Technical Committee	0911071871	ibsasoboka2020@gmail.com
2	Tadele Tadesse	M	Sinana Agricultural Research Centre	Cereal Researcher	0911967286	Tadyeko20@gmail.com
3	Muhammed Berso	M	Sinana Agricultural Research Centre	Horticultural crop Researcher	0913095962	
4	Wubshet Alemu	M	Sinana Agricultural Research Centre	Crop Pathologist	0913091568	wubtesema@gmail.com
5	Umer kadi	M	Sinana Woreda Bureau of Agriculture	Seed Expert	0226652933	
6	Debele Abebe	M	Sinana Woreda Bureau of Agriculture	AGP focal person and IP technical committee	0911098805	
7	Mujib A/Selam	M	Sinana Woreda Bureau of Agriculture	Livestock Extension	0910687559	
8	Eshet Adugna	M	Woreda Livestock Agency	Livestock Expert and IP technical committee	0912265493	
9	A/Majid Aman	M	Woreda Bureau of agriculture	Crop Extension Team leader	0926833336	-
10	Adamu Worku	M	Woreda Mine and Energy Office	Head	0913342737	
11	Tsehay Amensisa	F	Woreda Women and Children Affair office	Head	0939338286	
12	Takele Zabana	M	Woreda Micro and small enterprise office	Expert	0940352454	
13	Bekele Megersa	M	Woreda Public Communication office	Head	0912312464	
14	Dechessa	M	Woreda	Head	0936257	

No	Name	Gender	Organization	Role/Responsibility	Telephone	E-mail
	Nuguse		Irrigation Office		220	
15	Getachew Zewude	M	Woreda youth and sport Affairs Office	Expert	0912255 212	
16	Solomon Faye	M	Zone vice administrator and zone agriculture office head.	Zone vice Admin and BOA head	0912001 935	
17	Zelege Gonfa	M	Robe Teachers Collage	Dean	0911996 606	
	Workalign Asefa	M	Woreda Bureau of Agriculture	Extensions and Innovation platform Committee chairman	0912254 853	gworkesh18@gmail.com
18	Taye Kebede(Dr .)	M	Madawalabu University Veterinary	Assistance professor and Lecturer	0911355 335	Tayekebede2012@gmail.com
19	Abdulnasir Yunus	M	Madawalabu University	NRM Head, Innovation plat form committee	0912145 056	nasruyunus@gmail.com
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27	Elias Damtew	M	ILRI	Agricultural Innovation System – Research Technician	0911065 004	<a href="mailto:e.damtew@cgiar.org">e.damtew@cgiar.org</a>
28	Apollo Habtamu	M	ILRI	Communication and Knowledge Management	0911....	<a href="mailto:a.habtamu@cgiar.org">a.habtamu@cgiar.org</a>