

# SBN National Workshop

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# 1. Introduction

Sesame Business Network (SBN) annual national workshop was held at Teye Hotel, Gondar on May 15-16, 2014. The national workshop has marked the first anniversary of the SBN support programme. The objectives of the workshop were sharing and learning from results and experiences of the first SBN production and marketing year, and to look ahead to the 2014-2015 season. It also focused on networking, exchanging, and building business linkages between sesame stakeholders in the region.

## 1.1 Participating organisations

The workshop brought together around 140 representatives from the 19 Sesame Business Clusters (SBCs), from wider sesame and agricultural public and private bodies, and from partner initiatives. See an overview below, and the full overview of participants in appendix 1.

- ❖ Representatives of the 19 sesame business clusters
- ❖ Sesame actors in the region (sesame producing firms, cooperatives, processors, unions, traders/trading houses, companies, ECX)
- ❖ North Gondar and West Tigray Zone and woreda administration offices
- ❖ Tigray and Amhara Bureaus of Agriculture, North Gondar and West Tigray Agriculture Departments and Woreda Offices of Agriculture
- ❖ North Gondar zone Cooperative Promotion Agency
- ❖ Research centres and institutes: Amhara and Tigray Agricultural Research Institutes (ARARI, TARI), Gondar and Humera Agricultural Research Centres (GARC, HUARC)
- ❖ SBN partner projects and initiatives (sesame or agricultural in nature): 2scale, CASCAPE, ISSD, Agriterra, SNV, PUM, Precise Consult International
- ❖ Local media (Ethiopia news agency, Amhara mass media agency)
- ❖ All SBN support programme staff



## 1.2 Welcoming and Opening Speech

Dr. Geremew Terefe, national coordinator of the SBN Support Programme, welcomed participants of the workshop. The workshop was officially opened by Dr. Eyasu Abrha, director general of the Tigray Agricultural Research Center. Dr. Eyasu emphasised the importance of the sesame sector for Ethiopia as a country, and for the Amhara and Tigray regions in particular. He stressed on the need for a multi-dimensional approach and participation of all stakeholders to further improve the sesame sector and to realise some of its current opportunities. A few opportunities that were mentioned by Dr. Eyasu are possibilities for production and market diversification by focusing on quality, on building and maintaining sustainable relations with (international) buyers and improving the export performance, and on strengthening overall relations among sesame stakeholders. Dr. Eyasu concluded by stating that we can work all together on these opportunities, by conducting careful planning of activities, by timely interventions, and by providing targeted guidance for an efficient use of resources and maximising the sesame output.



Dr. Geremew Terefe, SBN national coordinator, welcoming participants



Dr. Eyasu Abrha, director general of TARI, workshop delivering opening speech

## 2. Presentations

### 2.1. General overview of activities and major results

Dr. Geremew presented the general overview of major activities and results of SBN and its support programme. He stated that the SBN support programme supports 19 clusters to achieve their sesame-related objectives. These clusters are located in north Gondar (four woredas), and West-Tigray (three woredas), and cover 54 *kebeles* (villages) with a total of about 50.000 households.

**A summary of the major activities of the support programme in its first year are:**

- ❖ Identifying stakeholders and sesame business clusters

- ❖ Recruiting 18 SBN facilitators and coaches (agronomists, value chain and business advisors, communication and extension staff, finance officers) and establishing SBN Support Programme offices at Gondar, Humera and Metema.
- ❖ Identifying the kind of support that clusters and other need, through the baseline and action planning workshops with all 19 clusters (who does what, where, when)
- ❖ Capacity building of development agents and model farmers (Sanja 35, Abderafi and Abrhjira 34, Humera and May-gaba 285)
- ❖ Collaboration with other stakeholders on training and other support:
  - Collaboration with Dipasa and training on contract farming and marketing for 320 farmers in Adebay and Bereket;
  - Marketing training for primary cooperative and union leaders (Metema 60, Tach Armachiho 68 and Mirab Armachiho 39);
  - Financial support for the Setit Union mobilisation meeting and for KHPSS technology visit;
  - Demonstration plots at 24 sites (Humera 15 and Metema 9), and the organisation of field days (7 field days in north Gondar-374 participants; 4 field days in Tigray-356 participants).
- ❖ Conducting action research studies on:
  - yield measurement (small, medium and large scale farmers),
  - post-harvest losses, and
  - production and credit costs.
- ❖ Establishing and conducting the SBN communication strategy. Quarterly newsletters have been published, and an SBN Website, Facebook page, and twitter account showcase SBN's activities and achievements. Also, short movies on workshops and postharvest losses were produced, and a radio show in Tigray and Amhara has started.

Dr. Geremew also elaborated on the **2014/2015 SBN plans**. He specifically explained the expansion of sesame business clusters from 19 to 36. This means that 17-18 clusters will be formed shortly (North Gondar 8-9 and West Tigray 9). He specifically stated that in Amhara region two new clusters will be formed:

- ❖ Amhara: Tumet and Meka in Metema; Dubaba and Bambaho in Quara; Maserodenb in Tach Armachiho and Korhumer/Girarwuha in Mirab Armachiho woredas. Seroka and Ergoye/Marzeneb will be formed in the newly included Tegede woreda.
- ❖ Tigray: four new clusters will be formed in Wolkayet woreda, namely, Walidiba, Tahtay-Mayhumer, Laelay-Mayhumer and Korari clusters. Besides, the existing Adigoshu, Rawyan and Tirkan clusters will all be split into two separate clusters. As a result, there will be three clusters: Bereket, Baker and May-weyni. Shilgile and Hiwot clusters will be formed in Kafta Humera and Tsgede respectively. All in all, 90 kebeles will be covered by the SBN support programme.

Major activities to be done by the SBN support programme in the 2014/2015 season are: providing training of trainers (ToTs) in the two regions, following up on current activities such as action planning for the new clusters, collaboration agreements and other preparation which have been made for the upcoming production season In particular, SBN will collaborate with Offices of Agricultures and Agricultural Research Centres on scaling-up of technologies, and/or demonstrations

of improved sesame production technologies. For this work, 48 quintal improved seeds have been made ready.

## 2.2 Introduction of some partner organisations

Following Dr. Geremew's presentation, an introduction of participants was done. All participants were asked to stand up by their sub-sector. This allowed us to see all participants, and their relative distribution from different sectors (research, clusters, private sector, government, etc).

Subsequently, partner projects of SBN support programme, who are active in the same region and work on sesame and/or other agricultural domains, presented themselves to the participants. A short summary of these presentations is given here. These presentations can also be found on the SBN website through the following link.: <http://sbnethiopia.org/presentations/>.

**2SCALE.** Mr. Addis Teshome from 2SCALE explained that 2SCALE project stands for 'Toward Sustainable Clusters in Agribusiness through Learning in Entrepreneurship'. The project is active in 12 countries, and is implemented by a consortium of three organisations, IFDC, ICRA and BoPInc. 2SCALE focuses on strengthening actors' linkage in clusters, with the following priority sectors in Ethiopia: sesame/sorghum, soy, potato, tomato, onion, dairy, maize. The activities are based on public-private partnership agreements, whereby they follow two approaches 1) partnerships with a lead firm serving or sourcing from farmers, and 2) a partnership that starts with a local business champion serving one or more targeted consumer markets. (For more information: <http://www.ifdc.org/2SCALE/>).



**PUM Netherlands senior experts.** Ms. Emebet Dejene first mentioned that small and medium enterprises (SME) are key for economic growth. PUM is a Netherlands based organisation which has been advising SMEs in 70 developing countries and emerging markets on how to improve their businesses. PUM works with senior expert volunteers who have gained 30 years professional experience. PUM can also give advice to sesame or other companies and enterprises in Ethiopia. Ethiopian SMEs can apply if: (1) they incapable of paying for consultants, (2) they are at least 2 years in business, and (3) they are more than 50% locally and privately owned. Ethiopia, PUM currently has 36 advisors, and they strive to get 60 in 2014. (For more information: <https://www.pum.nl/>).



**Agriterra.** Mr. Cor-Jan Zee gave a brief update on Agriterra's work on supporting the sesame sector mainly through farmer cooperative unions. Agriterra gives support to all the main unions in Tigray and Amhara regions, and is looking into a regional cooperation system. Cor-Jan indicated that he hopes to have a programme to export sesame into the international market. (For more information: <https://www.agriterra.org/en>).



**Precise Consult International (PCI) PLC.** Mr. Tedla Bekele pointed out that PCI is founded in 2007 by returnees from the Diaspora. The company is a vision driven one (a business revolution for Ethiopia/Africa), and is now the largest private sector development and finance consulting firm in Ethiopia with more than 25 permanent staff members. Priority Interventions of PCI regarding sesame is that it facilitates the introduction of improved seed varieties, encourages sesame value addition,



agricultural machineries/equipment development, and facilitate international market linkages. A partnership with SBN and C4C (SNV) can be on a joint selection of critical value chain problems (addressed by incubates businesses), selection of incubates, hosting the incubation manager and, possibly, financing software activities related to incubate businesses. (For more information: <http://ethiopiainvestor.com/>)

### **2.3. Demonstration of Improved Sesame Varieties with their Production Package**

Results of different studies conducted by the SBN support programme were presented. First, the result of the demonstration of improved sesame varieties with their production package was presented by Melisew Misker, agricultural production coach at Metema, Amhara region.

In his presentation, Melisew pointed out that because of its importance as a major export commodity, the area coverage and production of sesame has been increasing. Nevertheless, yields have been lower, mainly because of poor management practices and a lack of high yielding varieties. As a result, demonstrations of sesame best practices were conducted with the objectives of (1) doubling the productivity of sesame in 2015; (2), validating available sesame technologies or best practices for further scaling up; and (3) creating awareness about improved high yielding varieties and agronomic practices.



Demonstrations were held in 14 sesame business clusters at 24 plots of farmers and Farmer Training Centers. The demonstrations were done in collaboration with development agents, research centers and model farmers. (See the implemented sesame production package in the demonstration plots in appendix 2).

The demonstrations revealed the following major findings:

- Sesame grain yield was found significantly increased in response to different agronomic practices.
- It is possible to improve productivity of sesame up to 14 qt/ha.
- Compared to local practices, use of improved technologies and good agricultural practices improved sesame productivity at least by 43%.

- The variety 'Abasina' performed better than other varieties in high rainfall (poor drained soil).
- With high plant population, sesame is highly susceptible to blight.
- There is a significant yield difference among clusters.
- The marginal rates of return (MRR) with improved production package were up to 138%,
- Use of improved technologies and GAP was found to be economical with an average net income of 19,670 ETB per ha.

## 2.4 Sesame Yield and Post-harvest Loss in Northwest Ethiopia

Kahsu Kelali, agricultural production coach at Humera, Tigray region presented the result of the post-harvest loss study. As an introduction, Kahsu mentioned that sesame is susceptible to many losses during the production process and further processes in the sesame value chain.



The objectives of the study were: to measure the potential and actual yield of sesame, to identify potential sources of yield loss, and to quantify yield losses of sesame through the supply chain. Yield estimations were made using the quadrant method (20 X 20 m), which means that sesame on these quadrants was measured. In addition to yield measurement, sesame losses during harvesting, drying (hilla stacking), threshing, hilla transport, sesame transport, and sesame storage were measured.

The study found that post-harvest losses of sesame in the northwest part of Ethiopia exceed 12%. Specifying for losses at the different stages, drying bundles of sesame stalks (hillas) on the field (5.54%), carrying hilla from place to place (1.85%), and untimely harvest (3.25%) are the major causes of loss on sesame after harvest.

The annual economic loss of sesame exceeds 1 billion ETB in the NW Ethiopia (calculated from 497,466 ha with an average productivity of 4.5 kg/ha with a selling price 4130 birr/quintals). Recommendations to reduce these sesame losses, and thereby the loss of money varied from 'gathering more hillas to one place', to 'improve storage and transport technologies', and 'increase farmers awareness on post-harvest losses'. A movie (13 minutes) has been made filming the different stages of the losses. A detailed report about the losses-study will follow, and factors of loss are not covered yet, will be published on the SBN website in due time.

### 2.4.1. Questions, answers and suggestions

- ❖ **Question:** *It was found that it is possible to produce 14 quintals per ha, but the reality is different. Farmers commonly produce 3-5 ha. Why is this so? What should our farmers do to increase productivity?*
- ❖ **Answer:** The result of the study shows that most farmers do not use fertilisers. Especially in Amhara region, 81 percent of the farmers do not use fertilisers. Those who use fertiliser do not follow the recommended usage. Yet, we cannot increase sesame's productivity by using only fertilisers. Farmers should employ the full improved sesame production package.
- ❖ **Question:** *Why are Belesa, slan and other low land areas are not considered in the support programme?*



- ❖ **Answer:** We start in some woredas of the two zones. We may extend our coverage in the future. This year we will increase our clusters from 19 to 36.
- ❖ **Question:** *We have not yet found a chemical for the pest Seteto. That is why farmers are forced to use prohibited chemicals. Now pests occur during flowering. Are you giving attention to web worm and other kinds of pests?*
- ❖ **Answer:** We have given attention to pest scouting and controlling. It is among one of the important steps included in the package, and we focused on pests in our demonstration work in the clusters. We have a plan to scale up the technology this year. One main reason for the occurrence of pests is the failure to rotate crops. Planting sesame alone leads to the intensification of pests.
- ❖ **Question:** *It has been said that nearly half a million ha land is covered by sesame in the northwest. This land should be harvested within 15 days and the workforce is limited. Why didn't the studies recommend a sesame harvesting machine?*
- ❖ **Answer:** We believe that it will not be fair to depend on human labour only. Harvesting machines should be introduced.

### Comments and suggestions

- ❖ Governmental, non-governmental and the private sector should come together and create synergy for the development of the sesame sector.
- ❖ It is also important to reduce the losses occurring at ECX.
- ❖ To reduce sesame losses because of bag piercing, a solution or alternative suggestion is desirable (f.e. new bags?). The quality of sesame is affected mainly after it has been stored. Most warehouses are made of corrugated irons. The iron becomes hot and the whitish sesame will turn yellowish because of the heat. So there is room for improvement at the storage places.
- ❖ Shortage of labour is one major problem on the side of small holder farmers. Because of this, farmers start harvesting the sesame too early (before maturity), which is an important stage of sesame losses.
- ❖ There is harvesting machine in our country which is pulled by a tractor. We will bring and demonstrate that during the harvesting time.

## 2.5. Credit costs in Metema and Humera areas



Oscar Geerts, assistant SBN coordinator, presented the results of a study on credit costs in the Metema and Humera area. Finance is one of the major challenges in the sector. This has negative consequences for the sesame producer. Because of shortage of money, farmers miss essential production activities, they take high interest rate loans, and there is no room for investments. Credit suppliers are 12 banks, primary cooperatives (yet cannot always supply credit for their members), and informal money lenders (spot market traders, investor farmers, groups).

A total of 475 respondents (25 per each of the 19 clusters) has participated in the credit cost survey. With regards to credit sources, micro-finance institutes are used most frequently (34%), followed by cooperatives (23%) and informal money lenders (22%). Informal money lenders form the largest credit share of farmers (48%), followed by friends and relatives (21%) and micro finance institutes (16%). Overall, one-third of the respondents ran short of money. These people miss one-third of the total finance that is required for cultivating their land. Sector-broad, the amount of missed money represents almost 11 % of the total finance requirement. Because of the current system, the formal sector misses out a market share of 1.5 billion birr.

The interest rate of informal money lenders is the highest (259%). Farmers use about half of their own credit for sesame (51.3%), while (48.7%) is borrowed credit. Farmers largely rely on the informal sector (76.8%). Only few farmers use fully their own credit (16.2%), or fully borrowed credit (9.5%), while farmers have an average credit gap of 8.4%.

### 2.5.1. Questions, answers and suggestions

- ❖ **Question:** *What is the difference in cost structure between smallholders and large scale sesame producers?*
- ❖ **Answer:** Smallholder farmers use family labor, therefore their cost is relatively low. Their cost covers only to the extent of primary markets, but large scale farmers reach to the ECX level and their costs are relatively high (they spend more on labour, machineries and management).
- ❖ **Question:** *What is the reason for the high sesame price volatility in Ethiopia? How is it possible to control the rise and fall of the price of sesame? In December it was 4000 plus, and in February it went down 3500.*
- ❖ **Answer:** Since the crop is an export product, the market price is largely determined by the international market, and the productivity of other countries. Sometimes their might have been a problem with the domestic market situation-related to import-export situation. But such claims should be verified through research. Further policy level lobbying and focus group discussions will be made to improve the financial flow from financial institutions to farm-gate level.

### Suggestions

- The informal money lenders are indeed an alternative source of credit, though they affect the sesame business. Many farmers went out of business as the interest rate was too high, and the payment period short. Banks cannot give credit because of insufficient collateral. This is an important topic that should be addressed in the sector. Yet, though controversial, informal money lenders play an important role, as they are the ones who provide credit when farmers need it most (especially during weeding and harvesting time) Hence, they are contributing for the sustainability of sesame production.
- The study is a good step forward in finding solutions for the financial problem in the sector and further discussions with policy makers should be undertaken. We should also work on promoting a saving culture, as to internal capitalisation of cooperatives and other stakeholders in the sector.
- As finance is the major problem in the sesame sector, this study is proposed and undertaken at its right time. It would be nice to include financial solutions experiences from other countries, and to brainstorm with the sector in Ethiopia on how to improve finance in sesame.

The afternoon session began with **business pitch of sesame stakeholders**. The stakeholders and partners got the chance to briefly describe their role and activities in the sesame sector. Among the stakeholders which described themselves are:

- ❖ Dansha Union
- ❖ Ambasel Trading House PLC
- ❖ West Tigray ECX
- ❖ High-tech Trading House
- ❖ Cooperative Bank of Oromia
- ❖ Kokit Multipurpose Cooperative
- ❖ Hiwot Agricultural Mechanisation PLC
- ❖ Yoni and Dani PLC
- ❖ Fana Limat multipurpose Cooperative
- ❖ Amhara Credit and Saving Institute (ACSI)
- ❖ Gondar Agricultural Research Center (GARC)
- ❖ Humera Agricultural Research Center (HuARC)
- ❖ Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute (EARI)
- ❖ CASCAPE/Bahir Dar University
- ❖ Investor farmers and ISSD Ethiopia.

## 2.6.Sesame Business Hall

Participants of the workshop visited the sesame business hall. Stakeholders in the SBN such as research centers, processors and other organisations presented what they do in the sesame business, using pictures, graphs, brochures and other materials. Some organisations presented their products (from seeds to chemicals and tools). This gave participants the opportunity to talk to one another, and see what the other stakeholders in SBN are doing. Participants expressed their happiness about what they have observed in the sesame business hall.



Participants visiting and discussing in the sesame business hall



Dr. Aduzna Wakjira deputy director general of EIAR

Before the closure of the first day, Dr. Aduzna Wakjira, deputy director general of Ethiopian institute of agriculture research (EIAR) pointed out that the aim of the regional and federal agricultural research institutes is to use new technologies to increase productivity, quality and to be competent in the market.

In line with the Growth and Transformation policy of the country, and by using the scarce resource that we have together, the agriculture sector should do appropriate and important work not only to ensure food security, but also to increase our foreign currency. For this, the agriculture sector should be supported by new knowledge, skills and technologies. He also stated the importance of participating key stakeholders and creating an innovation platform in enhancing agricultural commodities.

## 2.7. Visit to Ambasel Trading House PLC

The second day began by having a short visit to Ambasel Trading House PLC at Gondar town. Ambasel Trading house has been engaged in sesame cleaning, hulling and making Tahini. Tanawork Desse, manager of Ambasel Trading PLC at Gondar, led visitors to the different parts of the company. She described the functions of the different cleaning and processing machines.



Left, Tanawork Desse, manager of Ambasel Trading PLC; Right, participants entering to Ambasel PLC at Gondar

## 2.8. Available Technologies for Sesame Productivity Enhancement

The first presentation in the second day was about available technologies for sesame productivity improvement. Mr. Hagos Tadesse, director of Humera Agricultural Research Center (HuARC) (and since recently SBN's agricultural production coach at Humera) first introduced sesame as a crop. Sesame is important for the Ethiopian economy, as an industrial crop, as a source of food and feed, and as a cash and risk-aversion crop. The Tigray and Amhara regions represent 70% of Ethiopia's sesame production. Sesame production in Ethiopia is constrained by several biotic and abiotic stresses (weeds, diseases, limited input, poor crop management practices, drought, soil related problems such as fertility, etc.). Major factors affecting productivity are: variety used, crop management / field management, and post-harvest management (harvesting, threshing, cleaning, packing and transporting). Different breeding strategies are required for different types of areas.

There are interesting research achievements pertaining to varieties/ breeding (a total of 18 varieties have been released in the country); sesame agronomy (the combined use of appropriate cultivars in their recommended agro-ecologies); and improved farm management practices. All this could result in the exploitation of their maximum yield potential and crop protection (good soil fertility management and good crop management practice). The presentation gave a summary of characteristics of recently released varieties. In addition, best practices for different sesame production stages (from land preparation to row planting, fertilisers, and rotation, and more) were explained.

Following the presentation of Mr. Hagos, Dr. Adugna Wakjira gave a brief explanation about the opportunities of the sesame sector. The sesame sector has been getting attention by the government and other bodies. Dr. Adugna emphasised that to improve productivity and quality of sesame, all the concerned stakeholders should work hard. He asked for the



support of Mekelle, Bahir Dar and Gondar Universities and research centres to the sector, and he mentioned that the national agricultural system is doing a road map or detailed plan which guides sesame stakeholders in setting standards or determining a course of action.

### 2.8.1. Questions and Suggestions

**Question:** *Is the recommendation from 2-3 seed rate for sowing sesame in broadcasting acceptable?*

**Answer:** It is nice to check both row planting and broadcasting through research, but in the extension programme we want farmers to quit broadcasting and use row planting alone.

#### Suggestions

- We need to search for non-shattering varieties.
- One main alternative to increase the production of sesame is intensification. For this we need to do crop suitability map. The map presented does not seem to be exhaustive. There are so many low lands which can grow sesame, for example Benishangul is an untouched area.
- Dr. Adugna: We work to get profit, agriculture is business. What is happening in the coffee sector (f.e. flavour type categorisation, market tags etc.) should be done for sesame too. The colour, oil content, fatty acid content should be examined in laboratories. We should work on both quantity and quality. We as Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institutions are strengthening our quality laboratories to be able to check for colour, chemical content and tag. Speciality should be there and it should be advertised for users and buyers. We are going to that direction.

### 2.9. 20 important steps to increase yield and improve quality of sesame

The SBN support programme has prepared a sesame production guide, together with its partners C4C/SNV. The publication of the guide was made possible with the financial support of the Netherlands government and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The production guide is a key document that will be provided to all farmers in the 19 (and soon) 36 SBCs, as to guide them towards improving their sesame productivity by applying good agricultural practices. The guide is key in the 2014 production season, and is used in the 2014 demonstration activities.

The production guide consists of 20 important steps to increase yield and improve quality of sesame. These 20 steps were presented by Dr. Geremew, and are:

1. Land cleaning and first ploughing
2. Rotation crops
3. Land preparation
4. Use of quality seeds

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 5. Sowing (seed rate & depth in row planting) | 13. Preparation of drying spots         |
| 6. Fertiliser application                     | 14. Stacking and drying                 |
| 7. Gap filling                                | 15. Threshing                           |
| 8. Weeding                                    | 16. Winnowing and cleaning              |
| 9. Thinning                                   | 17. Bagging                             |
| 10. Pest scouting                             | 18. loading, transporting and unloading |
| 11. Pest control                              | 19. Storing                             |
| 12. Maturity and harvesting                   | 20. Monitoring and evaluation           |

The manual can be downloaded from the SBN website through the following link:  
<http://sbnetiopia.org/brochures/>

## 2.10. Collaboration agreements and innovation fund

Mr. Ted Schrader, senior coordinator of the SBN support programme from CDI, Wageningen University in the Netherlands, presented about SBN's collaboration agreements and innovation fund. First, the audience was briefed on the main principles of the SBN programme. Mr. Schrader explained the importance of collaboration in agribusiness development, and emphasised the importance of supporting entrepreneurship and sustainable business development, and of joint understanding, action and goal achievement.



SBN aims to create competitive, sustainable, inclusive sesame value chain development. In order to do this with all stakeholders involved, SBN has co-funding mechanisms and principles. There are four different funds (SBC, ToT, C4C and SBN Innovation fund) that support different parts and actors of the sesame business network. Principles for establishing collaboration agreements and funding partnerships with the SBN support programme is that there should always be a link to economic objectives and priorities of the sesame stakeholders, that there should always be a joint budget, and added value of the SBN support programme (no funding on what stakeholders can do themselves).

Mr. Schrader also mentioned that the most important use of the SBC fund this year is for rolling-out the yield and quality improvement package. This package will reach 93 kebeles, covering 912 sites, for which 970 local trainers will be trained.

## 3. Group discussions on strategic challenges

The afternoon part of day two was used to discuss with all stakeholders in the room on how to collectively address the most important strategic challenges of the Ethiopian sesame sector. Gareth Borman, SBN coordinator from CDI, the Netherlands, briefly described how participants will make discussion in a world café concerning priority challenges for SBN.

**The main challenges identified were:**

- 1) Access to credit,
- 2) Quality, value addition and marketing,
- 3) Productivity improvement,
- 4) Crop rotation for farming system.

In four groups, discussions on the four selected strategic challenges were held. The discussions focused on how to innovate and improve the performance of the sesame sector by tackling the particular four challenges. In addition, groups were asked to think about possibilities for forming a Task Force that could address these main challenges (with support of the SBN support programme). After thorough discussions, participants presented what they discussed in their specific groups for the large audience. The following part briefly summarises their presentations.



Participants discussing in groups

## **Group 1: Improving the reach of financial organisations**

### *Background to the challenge*

Access to credit is often mentioned as number one constrained in the area. Currently, formal finance institutions serve a limited population. Many, in particular smallholders, turn to informal sources for credit (which comes at high cost). The formal sector misses out a market share of 1.5 billion birr. Questions for this first group were: (1) *How can the formal sector supply 1.5 billion birr timeously to credit seekers?;* and (2) *Which organisations and/or individuals are knowledgeable and resourceful for forming a taskforce to address this topic?*

Group 1 suggested to:

- ❖ enhance the societies saving culture,
- ❖ develop the saving culture of farmers cooperatives,
- ❖ lobby credit and saving institutions, so that they can provide credit in kind (tractor, quality seed, fuel etc.),
- ❖ establish agriculture banks,
- ❖ improve the working procedure of financial institutions,
- ❖ facilitate a surety service(cooperatives) for their members so that they can get credit from financial institutions,
- ❖ give the ownership of warehouses which have been built by the support of the government to cooperatives so that cooperatives can use them for collateral

Key stakeholders for a Task Force will be: government bodies such as Agricultural Research Centers, Cooperative Promotion Offices, Woreda Offices of Agriculture, Coops, capacity builders, micro finance institutions, and unions.

## **Group 2: Quality, value addition and marketing**

### *Background to the challenge*

In the past, the demand for sesame has been high. Incentives for quality production and value addition are weak, while global production has increased. We could anticipate on a price decline, increased competition and a greater demand for quality. Questions for this group were: (1) *How can SBN prepare for an international market that demands quality, and how can producers and processors be rewarded?;* and (2) *Which organisations and/or individuals are knowledgeable and resourceful for forming a taskforce to address this topic?*

Group 2 suggested to:

- ❖ create awareness on export marketing requirements,
- ❖ be transparent on grading procedure and respecting ECX quality requirements,
- ❖ provide higher prices for better quality at primary market centers,
- ❖ encourage sesame value addition industries by giving loan access,
- ❖ work in joint ventures and capital mobilisation,
- ❖ promote Ethiopian sesame, for example, by domestic exhibitions, giving due attention to quality at all levels, including storage and transportation, and by studying the market of different international market requirements (Asia, Europe and USA, developing products including oil, chocolate, Tahini).

Key stakeholders for a Task Force will be: Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Trade and Transport, Agricultural Transformation Agency, Agricultural Research Centers (ARC), Universities, private Sector, Coop, Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX), chamber of commerce, NGOs.

## **Group 3: Productivity improvement**

### *Background to the challenge:*

Research has developed a strongly evidence-based package for improved sesame production (the 20-steps manual). Regional Bureaus of Agriculture and the SBN support programme have ambitious plans to go to scale in demonstrating it on farmer training sites. To realise productivity improvement, many stakeholders need to be involved, including farmers, development agents, woreda offices and regional stakeholders. The questions for this group were: (1) *How can SBN ensure implementation is well coordinated;* and (2) *How can SBN share the experiences and knowledge generated with all farmers in northwest Ethiopia?*

In order to improve the productivity of sesame, group 3 suggested:

- ❖ the establishment of a sesame platform at woreda level,



- ❖ give support to research centers so that they can release new varieties and introduce improved production technologies. In addition, such a platform could support the agriculture sector by
  - providing capacity building training for DAs and development groups,
  - strengthening the farmer training sites (FTCs),
  - producing different manuals,
  - availing quality seed,
  - giving incentives for DAs and model farmers who perform well, and
  - evaluate the work of stakeholders continuously. Seed selection should be done by participating farmers.

Key stakeholders for a Task Force will be: Offices of Agriculture, farmers' cooperatives, trade and transport, Agricultural research centers, and the SBN support programme should work together.

#### **Group 4: Crop rotation for farming system sustainability**

##### *Background to the challenge:*

Evidence indicates that sesame yields decline, whereas soil fertility and pest incidences are worsened by mono-cropping. Hence crop rotation is an important practice for sustainable yield and risk management, though farmers see little attraction in cultivating alternative crops. The questions for the group to discuss were: (1) *How can SBN promote crop rotation and incentives to invest in alternative crop production?*, and (2) *Which organisations and/or individuals are knowledgeable and resourceful for forming a taskforce to address this topic?*

Group four started to present that mono-cropping reduces soil fertility, increases weed infestation, increases disease and pest occurrence. Then they raised the issue why farmers always plant sesame and forwarded the following reasons: lack of alternative crops, sorghum (is available but they do not like to plant it because of Striga and market); cotton (because of disease, insects and market); soybean and green gram (because it is not well introduced).

The group suggested that the SBN support programme (and other stakeholders) can promote crop rotation by introducing suitable crop varieties for the market by facilitating/providing training and capacity building for farmers, investors, exporters, development agents and private sectors; by controlling diseases and pests, and by availing an alternative crop and searching for market.

They suggested that a taskforce could address crop rotation, whereas there is the need to include research institutions, higher education/institutions, model farmers, land administration, Cooperative Promotion Office, Agricultural Transformation Agency, ACDI VOCA, mass media, government and non-government organisations, Ministry of Agriculture, CASCAP, Integrated Sees Sector Development, PUM and FAO.

A suggestion from the audience was that the government could also give attention to other crops. Another participant highlighted that teff has become expensive, as Injera is being exported. It was suggested to include sorghum in the AGP crops, as it is used by many people to make Injera. A valuable suggestion to SBN is to give attention to sorghum for intercropping with sesame.

### 3.1. Ways forward on strategic topics

After the group presentations, Mr. Gareth made a general reflection based on the suggestion of the discussions. It will be difficult to meet for these people timely as they are too. We need a core group within that taskforce that has responsibility to follow up on these strategic issues. SBN support programme staff will immediately take the input, organise a meeting for follow up with representatives of this organisations, and come together look at the reviews and suggestions made, and to review and elect specific individuals who will be the key coordinating people of the task force. Specific Terms of References will be generated for a specific group of individually selected members and that will commence the planning for activities as well with specific responsibilities for each member.

Dr. Adugna added that because of its potential benefit to the sesame sector, addressing these challenges and working on ways forward also has the government's attention. He stated that a sesame production and marketing consulting council needs to be established, which the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute will support. He concluded that we should all work on capacity development as to collective tackle the challenges and work on the ideas raised, which he also sees as a personal assignment.

### 4. Closing Speech

The workshop was officially closed by Mr. Fisseha Bezabih, deputy head of Tigray BoA. In his closing remark Mr. Fisseha said that they have learnt a lot in these two days. He stated all the presentations were evidence-based and the workshop was participatory. *“As an administration, I could say that the results that we have got in relation to sesame so far are because of the fertile land that we have. It is only very recently that we are applying our efforts to improve the production of sesame. We have seen that we have a number of gaps that we should fill.”*



He added that sesame is among the major crops that the government gives priority. *“Our competition is with the world both in quality and quantity, so we should take lessons from the presentations. All stakeholders should take the responsibility to improve the sesame sector.”* He refers to farmers that, as producers, they are the main owners and they should do their best to improve the production and marketing of sesame.

*“We need to coordinate and align all the efforts and solve the problems step by step. If we work together and work based on research, if we work together with development partners, we can make a difference. The government and all other bodies are committed to work together with SBN support programme.”* He finally appreciated the government of Netherlands, the SBN support programme staff members, Gondar town administration, Ambasel Trading House PLC and officially closed the workshop.

## Appendix 1: List of Workshop Participants

No	Name	Organisation	Region	Woreda
1	Haileyesus Nigatu	CPO	Amhara	Gondar
2	G.meskel Birhane	OA	Tigray	k/Humera
3	Abdela Muhamed	C4C	Amhara	Gondar
4	Amsalu Arag	ISSD	Amhara	
5	Molla Gellow	Trade & trans	Amhara	T.Aremachiho
6	Genetu Beletu	Yonni & Danni PLC	Amhara	Metma
7	Hailu Tesfaye	Warka Trading	Tigray	Setit Humera
8	Atakilty Amare	ECX	Tigray	Humera
9	Yirga Andualem	ECX	Tigray	Humera
10	Tesfay Berhe	Union	Tigray	Welkiet
11	Birhane Welday	CPO	Tigray	Welkiet
12	Lijalem Mekonnen	Wegagen B	Tigray	Humera
13	Tanawork Desse	Ambasel	Amhara	Gondar
14	Gezahegn Serbesa	ECX	AA	
15	Addsaalem Bitew	WoA	Amhara	W.Armcheho
16	Fantahun Tegegne	CPA	Amhara	Gondar
17	Melkamu Sahil	Ambassel	Amhara	Gondar
18	Tekeba Tebabal	Gonder admin	Amhara	Gondar
19	Tiaye Teklewold	ARARI	Amhara	Gondar
20	Shemelahe Yeshanew	BoA	Amhara	Gondar
21	Tewdros Tekie	Trade & Transport	Amhara	Metema
22	Mesfin Fenta	GARC	Amhara	Gondar
23	Habtamu Asres	ARARI	Amhara	Gondar
24	Sewalem Kassa	ECX	Amhara	Gondar
25	Solomon Assefa	Warka	Tigray	Humera
26	Eyasu Abirha	TARI	Tigray	Mekelle
27	Fisha Bezabih	BoA	Tigray	Mekelle
28	Getahun Dama	Admin	Amhara	M. Armachiho
29	Awoke Gizachew	Agriculture	Amhara	M. Armachiho
30	Amanu Banti	ISSD/BDU	Amhara	Bahir Dar
31	Tiku Girmay	farmer	Tigray	Tsegede
32	Abebe Mamo	Cooperative	Amhara	Metma
33	Maru Shiferraw	Admin	Amhara	T.Armachiho
34	Makel Mulugeta	Admin	Amhara	Tegede
35	Ashagere Alemu	Agriculture	Amhara	Gondar
36	G/Kidan W/Gebriel	Cooperative	Tigray	Humera
37	G/Micheal G/Kidan	HuARC	Tigray	Humera
38	Haile Ashebir	TARI	Tigray	Mekelle
39	Meseret Lijalem	Thsehey Union	Amhara	Gondar
40	Woldie Menna	GCCSA	Amhara	Gondar
41	Tilahun Achenef	Selam Union	Amhara	T.Armachiho
42	Yeshiwondim Dessie	CPO	Amhara	Tegede
43	Tilahun Admasie	Coop	Amhara	M.Armachiho
44	Azenaw Adeba	Agriculture	Amhara	Tegede

45	YaEshetiebsira	Admin	Amhara	Tegede
46	Dereje Ayalew	BDU/ISSD	Amhara	Bahir Dar
47	Yihene G/Selassie	CASCADE	Amhara	Bahir Dar
48	Eyasu Yilak	Admin	Amhara	T. Armachiho
49	Bera Birara	Cooperative	Amhara	T. Armachiho
50	Mekonnen Asrade	Extension	Amhara	T. Armachiho
51	Chalachew Derso	Agriculture	Amhara	T. Armachiho
52	Sisay kebu	Agriculture	Amhara	Metema
53	Desslegn Tassew	Admin	Amhara	Metema
54	Awoke Gizachew	Agriculture	Amhara	W. Armachoho
55	Getahun Dama	Admin	Amhara	W. Armachoho
56	Restce Eshetie	Union	Amhara	Tegede
57	Sehul Truesaw	Precise	Amhara	
58	Melaku Mulugeta	AMMA	Amhara	Bahir Dar
59	Tefere Abay	MU/ISSD	Tigray	Mekelle
60	Hailu Berhane	Agriterra	AA	
61	Henok Assfa	Precise consult	AA	AA
62	Abere Asfaw	ECEA	Amhara	M. Armachiho
63	Demelash Seifu	C4C	Amhara	Bahir Dar
64	Daganachew Wagnew	TT	Amhara	M. Armachiho
65	Mulualem Mimile	Inv. farmer	Amhara	M. Armachiho
66	Moges Getnet	ACSI	Amhara	Gondar
67	Eshetu Simegnew	Cooperative	Amhara	M.Armachiho
68	Wondwosen Waja	Inv. farmer	Amhara	M. Armachiho
69	Nega Eshetie	Cooperative	Amhara	Metema
70	Tedla Bekele	Precise consult	AA	AA
71	Zerihun Getachew	ENA	Amhara	Gondar
72	Nigatu Yesuf	ENA	Amhara	Gondar
73	Cor Jan Zee	Agriterra	AA	AA
74	Yeshitila Merene	ARARI	Amhara	Bahir Dar
75	Abriham Abyu	GARC	Amhara	Gondar
76	Melaku Azanaw	GARC	Amhara	Metema
77	Yohannes Ebabuye	GARC	Amhara	Gondar
78	Mebratu Degu	Agriculture	Amhara	Gondar
79	Bayelegn Zeray	ECX	Amhara	Gondar
80	Wagnew Adane	Commun.	Amhara	Gondar
81	Tamirat Bizu	Admin	Amhara	Metema
82	Hailu Dagne	CPA	Amhara	Gondar
83	Tekalign Yeblet	Cooperative	Amhara	Metema
84	Tesfaye Kassa	Cooperative	Amhara	Metema
85	Woldie Menberu	Cooperative	Amhara	Quara
86	Mesenbet Melkamu	Agriculture	Amhara	Abrihajira
87	Zerfu Abuhay	Admin	Amhara	Abrihajira
88	Araya G/Selasse	Cooperative	Amhara	Abderafie
89	Adisaem Bitew	Agriculture	Amhara	Abrihajira
90	Teklemichel Tadesse	Dansha Union	Tigray	Tsegede
91	G/giworgies Atsebeha	Cooperative	Tigray	Humera
92	Aklilu Tadesse	Cooperative	Tigray	Humera

93	Ayneshe Zewdie	Coo	Amhara	T. Armachiho
94	Hagoss Tadesse	HuARC	Tigray	Humera
95	G/Michael G/kidan		Tigray	Humera
96	Haile Zibelo	HuARC	Tigray	Humera
97	Hagos W/gebriel	Agriculture	Amhara	Gondar
98	Teame H/Mariam	Cooperative	Tigray	Tsegede
99	Guadie Michaiel	Union	Amhara	Metema
100	Abrha Aregay	Cooperative	Tigray	Humera
101	Bahlibi Gebru	Hiwote Argi PLC	Tigray	Humera
102	Habtamu Alemwork	Yony & Dany PLC	Amhara	Metema
103	Assefa Goshe	Trade& Transport	Amhara	Tegede
104	G/michael Beyene	Guna	Tigray	Humera
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106	Hayelom bera	Cooperative	Tigray	K/ Humera
107	Goitom kiafe	Setit Union	Tigray	S/Humera
108	Guelay G/Abt	Cooperative	Tigray	K/Humera
109	Shishay Abraham	Cooperative	Tigray	K/Humera
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115	Embaye Gebre	Cooperative	Tigray	K/Humera
116	Alemseged Amare	Cooperative	Tigray	K/Humera
117	Gebre kiros W/Gebrie	Cooperative	Tigray	K/Humera
118	Kenfe Atenaw	Cooperative	Tigray	K/Humera
119	Alemseged Abuayo	Cooperative	Tigray	K/Humera
120	Desta Kahsay	Dimtsi Woyane	Tigray	Mekele
121	Asnake Zewdu	BoA	Amhara	T/Armachiho
122	Amanuel Temesgen	Wegagen Bank	Tigray	S/Humera
123	Getachew Antehun	CBO	Tigray	Humera
124	Yitalew Baye	Cooperative	Amhara	Metema
125	Fithalew Belay	Cooperative	Amhara	Sanja
126	Birhane Mengesha	Agriculture	Tigray	Humera
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128	Tsegaye Yeshiwas	AMMA	Amhara	Bahir Dar
129	Shewangizaw Wogderes	AMMA	Amhara	Bahir Dar
130	Habtamu Belayneh	CBE	Amhara	Gondar
131	Assefa W/Senbet		Amhara	Bahir Dar
132	Deres Baye	Cooperative	Amhara	Metema
133	Yohannes Womdemu		Amhara	M.Armachiho
134	Emebet Dejene	PUM	AA	AA
135	Efrem Arefayne	Research		
136	Adugna Wakjira	EIAR	AA	AA

## Appendix 2: SBN support programme staff

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## Appendix 3: Annual sesame business workshop programme, Gondar, May 15-16 2014

### Day 1 (May 15<sup>th</sup> 2014)

8.30-9.00	Registration & coffee
9.00-9.15	Welcome & opening speech
9.15-09.45	Introduction of participants
09.45-10.30	SBN 1 year later: overview of major activities and results
10.30-11.00	Coffee break
11.00-11.30	Yields can double !
11.30 – 12.00	Access to credit : key factor for success
12.00-12.30	The sector loses one billion – reducing harvest, transport and storage losses
12.30-13.00	Marketing & value addition : experiences and challenges
13.00-14.15	Lunch
14.15-15.00	Business pitch sesame stakeholders
15.00-16.00	Sesame business hall: shopping and networking
16.00-16.30	Coffee/tea break
16.30-17.00	Shopping and networking results : wrap-up in plenary
17.00 - 17.15	Closure of day 1 and announcement program day 2

### Day 2 (May 16<sup>th</sup> 2014)

9.00-9.05	Welcome & opening day 2
09.05-09.30	Reducing production costs per quintal to raise farmers' income
09.30-10.30	Yields improvement: presentation of sesame yield and quality improvement package
10.30-11.00	Coffee break
11.00-11.20	Collaboration agreements and innovation fund
11.20-12.00	Major strategic issues for sesame sector innovation and performance improvement
12.00-12.45	Group work on strategic topics (first round)
12.45-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.00	Group work on strategic topics (second round)
15.00-15.30	Coffee/tea break
15.30-16.30	Present strategic outcomes and way forward
16.30-17.00	Establishment of task forces
17.00-....	Closing drinks

## Appendix 4: Improved Sesame Production Package

- Land preparation (2x tilling),
- Variety (setit 1, Humera 1, Abasena + local variety)
- Seed rate 4 kg/ha,
- Row planting 40 x 10cm b/n rows & plants, respectively,
- Fertiliser (100kg DAP + 50kg Urea (half urea at planting & the remaining 1/2 at flowering),
- Thinning (during first weeding),
- Weeding 3x (7-14 days first, 30-35 second & 65-75 days third),
- Pest scouting (emergence to harvest every week or fortnight),
- Webworm (Malathion 50% @2/Ethiosulfan 35% EC @ 1.5 l/ha)
- Harvesting (when 2/3 of plants assume lemon yellow colour)
- Drying (plant hilla on levelled high spots close to each other (10 hilla), dry not more than 2 weeks),
- Threshing (near each hilla, don't carry dry plants away)
- Bagging (in pesticide free, new, clean & airtight sacks)