



The Sesame Business Network (SBN) Support Programme has been providing a range of services to stakeholders organised in local sesame clusters and at *woreda*, zonal and regional level in the Northwest Ethiopia. Below the highlights of 2015 are shortly presented.



20 Steps rolling out activity

- Demonstration plots were conducted at 1,950 sites (1,195 in Western Tigray and 755 in North Gondar). Some farmers already manage to harvest more than 10 qt/ha.
- For all demo plots agronomic logbooks have been kept and are currently being analysed.
- In 20 farmer training centers rotation crops were demonstrated (Sorghums, cotton, mung bean soy-bean).

Training

- Core team of 42 professionals trained; 1768 model farmers and 509 development agents as trainers on 20 important steps to double yield and improve the quality of sesame.
- These trainees went to their areas, established demonstration plots, around which at least 50,000 farmers observed and learnt about the recommended practices.
- 121 selected farmers were trained on basic cost-benefit analysis, with the tool "Manage your farm - manage your pocket". They kept an economic logbook about their farm.
- Over 75 model farmers were trained on sending SMS messages about their farm practices.

Workshops and meetings

- Regional meetings were held in both Amhara (60 participants) and Tigray (110). Participants appreciate that these meetings effectively bring different stakeholders together.
- A workshop was organised on "financial services for sesame value chains", in collaboration with Terrafina

Micro Finance (TMF) and Rabobank International Advisory Services (RIAS). This marks the beginning to more structurally address the rural finance challenges during the second phase of the project.

- National stakeholders meetings were held in Mekelle (April 2015) and in Addis Ababa (December 2015), each with more than 100 participants.

Technology introduction and demonstration

The following machineries and related technologies were tested and demonstrated:

- Tractor-mounted and animal-drawn row planters, harvesting machines, ripper binder, fertilizer spreaders, stable crushers and a hand held brush cutters.

Trade Mission

- Trade mission co-organised with The Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC). This helped Ethiopian sesame exporters to better know about European market preferences, and European importers to assess Ethiopian conditions.

Communication

- All the major activities of SBN and its Support Programme have been reported, filmed and documented.
- 4 issues of the SBN newsletter were published in 3 languages.
- Website (<http://sbnethiopia.org/>), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/SBNEthiopia>) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/SBNEthiopia>) have been updated regularly.
- Banners, posters, one pagers and briefs were produced and distributed to cluster actors and SBN stakeholders.

SBN in Numbers

38 clusters

73 Kebeles

8 Woredas

2 zones in 2 regions

Over 72 Active Farmers Primary Cooperatives

5 Farmers Cooperative Unions

70,000 farmers

2 Agricultural Research Centers

2 Bureaus, 2 Departments and 8 Offices of Agriculture

Banks

Microfinance Institutions

8 Woreda Cooperative Promotion Offices

