

Report on Theory of Change workshop Fertile Ground Initiative 24 – 25 November 2014, Addis Ababa

Introduction

The Theory of Change (ToC) of the Fertile Grounds Initiative (FGI) workshop consisted of 1,5 day full of activities to which all participants are actively contributing (see program, Annex 1). The workshop was co-organised with the Integrated Soil Fertility Community (ISFC), which is initiated by the AgriProfocus network. Participants came from different sectors of the Ethiopian society: research, government, civil society, private sector and international networks. The list of participants is added in Annex 2.

The outputs of the workshop are:

- ✚ A Theory of Change at the Ethiopia Country level
- ✚ Overview of key actors interested to become programme/business partners
- ✚ Outline of next steps to be taken and a basic project formulation

Results Monday morning

The first half day focussed on (i) introduction of participants and check on objectives and programme, (ii) what are current ideas and lessons learned?, (iii) introduction of ToC thinking and building on current ToC practices and ideas, (iv) analysis of the main actors and the ecosystem, and (v) projection into the future of the intended change process and agreeing on main vision and scope of the initiative.

In his opening speech Jan Willem Nibbering, representing EKN Addis Ababa, mentioned the importance of the Fertile Ground Initiative and he invited the workshop participants to consider soil health as an alternative for soil fertility. Christy van Beek presented the Fertile Grounds Initiative (FGI) in brief to secure that all participants have at least the same basic knowledge before going into the workshop. Subsequently, Yeleka de Nooy presented Agri-Profocus and invited all to join the AgriHub online platform. Niek van Duivenbooden invited all to look into the future and consider options where organic matters should come from, where you should invest in soil fertility with compost, accept a lower than normal return of investment, and that new economies of scales are to be discovered.

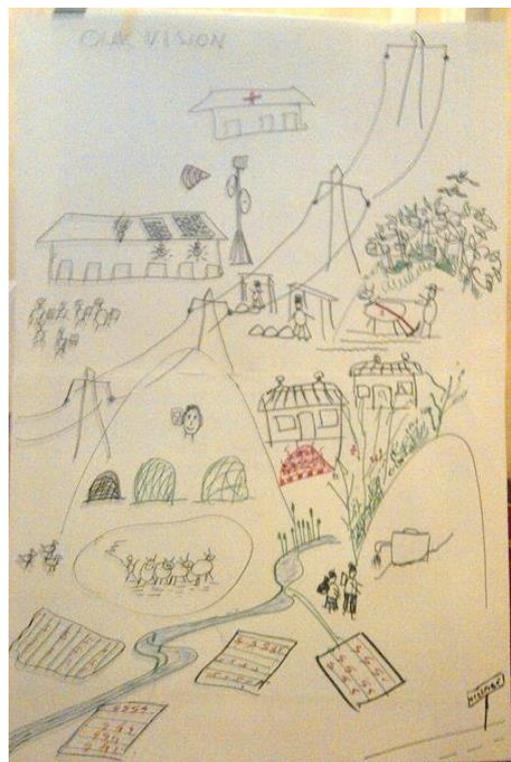
The analysis of actors and the ecosystem resulted in the following lessons learned & other important remarks relevant for the ToC (see Annex 3 for all lessons learned):

- ✚ Awareness on soil fertility is still lacking (despite call from University);
- ✚ Capacity building is required for a lot of groups, and research results should be translated for use by farmers;
- ✚ Supply chain should be addressed;
- ✚ Specificity is required taking into account site specific differences (versus standard packages for the entire country);
- ✚ Diversification in inputs (products);
- ✚ Communication: same message, research to be translated for farmers;
- ✚ Other elements than N and P are becoming limiting (e.g. K), so that standard recommendations are not valid anymore for most farmers (need for blends);
- ✚ Land use policy is not well implemented, partly caused by a lack of law enforcement;
- ✚ Farmyard manure is a limiting factor for most farmers;
- ✚ Acid soils are hard to use by farmers as lime is unaffordable to them;
- ✚ Nutrient rich agroforestry systems (N-fixing trees) should be utilized;
- ✚ Rock phosphate is considered an alternative source of P, and in the meantime also buffering acidity.

The group vision was created by making first a personal vision, followed by sharing of ideas and definition of 5 keywords that were put in order to make a statement. Keywords and personal missions statements included, for instance:

- + Small holders farmers understand their soils and treat them accordingly; sustainable good soil fertility; balance with environment; all farmers know better how they could improve soil fertility management; farmers empowered; mainstream soil fertility management
- + Food security; increased yield/productivity
- + Increased livelihood
- + Access to agricultural inputs
- + Remote technology
- + Information on soil fertility
- + Food secured Ethiopia through increased adoption of soil health management technologies; Healthy soils of Ethiopia for food security and sustainability
- + All stake holders work aligned

Finally, the statements of the two groups were combined into the Group vision: **All stakeholders work aligned to enable farmers to understand their soils, using the right inputs and tools to secure soil health sustainability leading to food and economic security in Ethiopia.**



Results Monday Afternoon

Monday after lunch two stakeholder analysis tools were applied, to have a good understanding about present and potential new stakeholders, their stakes, relationships, access to resources etc.

One group made an overview where the different tasks and functions of the whole sector were identified, after which a screening was done who is doing what now (end of 2014). See Annex 4 for the overview.

Another group made a network analysis how the stakeholders are linked by end 2014, see picture below.

The different levels of power were visualised with high (two), medium (five) and low (five). Their linkages in terms of information exchange, trade/product exchange and money exchange were added in different colours. The network mapping group concluded that two main actors and therefore core partners of the initiative should be the farmers and the Government structures in the Agricultural Sector (GAS: Ministry, extension workers and regional bureaus of agriculture). The five medium influential actors are the structures generating technology (Universities and Agric. Research Centres), Cooperatives/unions, MFI-Banks, traders for input-supply, and donors. Finally, a group of low level of influence is represented by media, telecom, NGOs and FBOs. Another conclusion was that at the start of sectoral change processes still subsidies are to be considered for inputs like fertilisers, seeds, chemicals, etc., but from the start the handing over/phasing in of private sector should be part of the design. Another key conclusion was that NGO's should inform each other much more and align actions.



Photo: Result of netapping exercise: two strong stakeholders (farmers and government, shown in red) are interacting with many other actors, of which some are more distant and some are more powerful (indicated by height of the column).

Results Tuesday morning

Based on the group work at the end of the first day, with the pathways with a vision and results/preconditions, the two groups finalised their ToC at the start of the day. They added the contributions from different actors/stakeholders needed to assure achievement of results (in yellow). In red they added activities/interventions that we (the preliminary initiative / task force) may need to do. The task force is suggested to be composed by a small team (3-4 people) which is envisaged to become the engine for the process to be carried out. Also the assumptions (in green) were added. Where are we assuming things which are not 100% sure, but which are critical for the change process to take place and

unfold. To find the assumptions we ask ourselves: why would it happen like this and what preconditions should be in place?

Photo: The Theory of Change evolves while adding more actors, assumptions and interventions.

After the break we worked in three groups:

1. Visualisation of the ToC pathways- see photo. This group started with a visualisation of the vision situation. This visualisation will be inspiration for the ToC visualisation.
2. Integration of the two Toc's and document in Excell – see attachments (Tegbaru, ATA and Maria, Hoarec)
3. Preparation of a presentation (what have we done, where will we go) for prof Tekalegn; by Hirpa (Wollega university) and Christy (WUR)



At 12.00/noon HE prof Tekalegn arrived. Reaction of HE prof.

Tekalegn: This is in fact part of the big soil health initiative that is timely and urgent. We are at a negative balance, so we have to change the system. Without organic matter the efficiency of fertilizer is not high enough; so we have to restore soil health. **So this is a valuable initiative!**

At the end of the day what matters is what we plan to do: increased agricultural productivity of the country with a well maintained soil fertility status. This will need strengthening of the linkages with existing networks' soil health consortium, (dr. Zebene is coordinating; he is also member of the soil health community but could not come this time). The objective is to make awareness creation about soil health issues with all stakeholders involved. HE Prof. Tekalegn remarked that he is happy that things are happening. He summarised his advice in the following points:

1. Allow for different scenario's where our approach could shift slightly. Not one size fits all. The situation in the regions differs. He suggest to select some 5-10 pilots.
2. At planning stage it is important to allow that this initiative evolves into a programme of 5-10 years.
3. When we talk about implementation, how do we streamline this in the existing system? Who will be your major focal person to work with? This is a balance between knowledge we have, we generate, and we have to scale up. The present system will be what will we achieve/expand upon in the first 5 years, what in the next 5 years?
4. The ideas presented by you are good. When interviewed I said, my role was maybe only to generate ideas. Ideas are only interesting when they are picked up and implemented. We are working in tandem with stakeholders; what has been the major problem in the country? **Institutional limitations** and **capacity** of people/ farmers
5. What are emerging scenarios? In 2010 there were no soil scientist in the MOA. Now there are many. Also in the regional bureau they are establishing soil directorates. How can we support them? How can we add value? So that they can assure "harmonization and synchronization", streamlining with the existing system. This initiative should not become an island in itself.
6. For the planned ESSS workshop in February the soil scientists may not be the (only) right forum? We need also extensional agencies and bureaus of agriculture; we need to invite additional stakeholders; let us make it a big event, for instance one day prior to the main event!

7. We should talk about radio programme because they now only talk about rhizobium; we should change it. And maybe have a newsletter? In English and translate in three (local) languages; and pockets size materials – unless we popularise from the beginning,

This is the start- how will we proceed?

- We want to set up a task force, that will elaborate and build on the work of this workshop, with inputs from all
- February action planning to be presented at ESSS annual meeting
- Lobbying and advocacy to mobilize stakeholders and funds

Much is going on in the coming months were we can join:

11-12 December bio saline agricultural workshop

15-16 December fertiliser policy and proclamation

The ESSS February workshop: collaborate with MOA, aligned action

Composition of task force: dr Teshome Soromesa, dr Hirpa Legesse, dr Wassie Haile, Tegbaru Bellete.

Closing word of HE prof. Tekalegn Mamon: *"Thank you for this initiative; there is a big momentum we need a time plan! We have to make this happen. This is a very good opportunity. We can bring the change!"*



Annex 1: Program

First half day Monday morning 24 November

Block 1 Intro block and scoping [1,5 hours between start and tea/coffee]

Welcome and short presentation of participants

Programme overview and agreeing on outputs to be reached

Introduction To Fertile Grounds Initiative

Introduction to soil health management community of APF Ethiopia

Scoping and forward thinking

Introducing ToC

Tea coffee

Block 2: Start ToC: vision and stakeholders [1,5 hours between tea/coffee and lunch]

Visioning and Overview of key actors

Lunch

Block 3: finalising the stakeholder analysis and preparing the ToC [1,5 hours between lunch and coffee/tea] [1,5 hours between coffee/tea and end of the day]

Presenting the Task-Analysis matrix and the netmapping of stakeholders. Concluding on main findings

Block 4: Strategies, change pathways

Reflect on possible main strategies (presentation FGI)

Pathways of change (main strategies) with preconditions (outcomes, benchmarks,..).

Cocktail and end of day I

Third half day (Tuesday morning 25 November)

Block 5: Completing the ToC [1,5 hours till tea/coffee]

Adding clarity on role of actors, our contributions/interventions and assumptions

10.00 Tea/coffee

Block 6: Finalising ToC and agreeing on next steps and evaluation[2 hours till lunch]

10.30 -11.30: work in three groups: 1) integrating the two ToC versions; 2) preparing the presentation; and 3) making a visualisation

11.30 – 12.00 Action planning

12.00-12.40 Presenting to prof Tegalegn

12.40 evaluation

12.50 Closing words

Annex 2: list of participants

Participants	ToC workshop	Tel.nr.	November 24-25
Professor Tekalegn	tekalignmamo@gmail.com t.mamo@ethionet.et ; Tekalign.Mamo@moa.gov.et	Opening workshop 251 116 462410	Minister's Advisor & State Minister
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RixtKomduur	Rixt.komduur@wur.nl	0912660724	Wageningen liaison
BirhanoDinssaDibssat	koketbd@gmail.com		Ambo University

Interested but not able to come:

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TigluTsfaye	tigletesf@gmail.com	0913476689	Sophort

Annex 3: lessons learned and suggestions from experiences in Ethiopia.

Method: two groups made an inventory and wrote their lessons learned on a flip chart. Everybody could vote for the most important lessons. These are presented in **BOLD**.

Climate change requires pro-active thinking!

Need to rethink the supply chain!!

Think about diversity in products

Soil fertility varies, so there is a need for soil specific fertiliser. Notion needs to be changed as we only use urea and DAP. ATA introduces blend fertiliser

Organic farming is bulky, not enough cattle to get enough farm yard manure and it is labour intensive

Soil Land management: can we make compost from human waste and involve youth? Use olicity is not implemented. Decision seems to be needed. Messages from research are not used

Rock dust could be used

There is no/low awareness

Soil acidity (West). Lime program stopped because too costly

Soil nutrient component (2009-2014): promote compost making and conservation agriculture. Details:

- Too much work for women
- 20 people make a group, collaborate on a farm
- Price of fertiliser is too high
- Enabling circumstances: capacity building needed (govt extension, gov. workers)

Land should be used according to its capacity. No enforcement law

Nutrient rich sources should be explored in nutrient rich areas --> *Eritrina brusan* (agroforestry) fixes nitrogen through the leaves.

Soil fertility management fertility (from knowledge to farmer): there is no clear knowledge and there is confusion

Combine with farm yard manure

Competing claims for organic matter

Overgrazing and overpopulation

Farming is seen as a "side job"

Labour requirements are high for compost making and uncontrolled outcome

Annex 4: Stakeholder analysis: listing the (potential) stakeholders and their tasks/mandates.

	Advice farmers	Provide inputs	policy	finance	dissemination	Tech development	advocacy	monitoring	Demonstration	Business case	Soil management
MoA/ATA/FTC			x	x	x			x	X		
Farmers	x				x						X
NGO	x	x		x	x	0	(x)	x	X		x
Cooperatives	x	x		x						X	
Blending plants and fertilizer industry		x								X	
universities	X				x	X	x		X		X
RARI	X				x	x	x		x		X
EIAR	X		/		x	x	x	x	x		X
BOA							x	X			
Woreda extension/Das	X				x			x	x		X
Soil laboratories	/										
Agricultural service providers	x	X				x			x	X	
Donor			0	x			X				
MFI				X						X	
MoE			X					X			
Media					X						
Retail/consumers							X			x	

Group A NETMAPPING: Two major stakeholders: farmers and GAS (Government and Agricultural Sector = Das, MoA, RARI). Major flows go to the farmers. This may be one of the factors contributing to sometimes confusing messages to the farmers.

NGOs are working on almost all the tasks, except policy making, which they are not allowed to do. We discuss the role of donors. We agree they have a strong role and sometimes also contribute to policy making.

There is a general lack of coordination of research organisations and different NGOs (dissemination different and sometimes contrary technologies). There is little interaction between NGOs and government.