

## Project summary

# Integrated Seed Sector Development in Ethiopia



**WAGENINGEN**  
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



Together with international partners, CDI supports the development of an integrated seed sector by working with farmer cooperatives, addressing issues of policy and stimulating an environment of cooperation and entrepreneurship.

### Complex and robust agricultural systems

Wide-scale commercialisation of smallholder farming is foreseen to be a predominant source for agricultural growth in Ethiopia. The prevailing 'hybrid maize model' for private sector development is considered by some to be most appropriate in realising African food security.

However, contemporary lessons reveal the limitations of this linear model in the context of complex and robust agricultural systems in Africa. Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD) appreciates the **unique challenges** faced by a sector rich in diversity. The objective of the ISSD programme, coordinated by Centre for Development Innovation (CDI), Wageningen UR is to strengthen the development of a vibrant, commercial and pluralistic seed sector in Ethiopia.

**Title:** Integrated Seed Sector Development in Ethiopia

**Start:** 1 December 2011

**End:** 31 December 2015

**Client(s):** Ministry of Foreign Affairs / DGIS

**Budget:** 10.2 million Euro

**Partners:** Bahir Dar University, Haramaya University, Hawassa University, Mekelle University, Oromia Seed Enterprise and the Ethiopian Seed Growers

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (CDI) is the knowledge broker of Wageningen University & Research. We foster and contribute to sustainable and inclusive food systems through actions in four specified and interlinked focus areas: Agriculture and Markets, Climate and Environment, Food and Nutrition, and Governance and Partnerships. Our staff has the unique combination of substantive knowledge, an international network and excellent process management qualities.

### Targeted interventions

ISSD proposes to build upon the strengths of informal (i.e. farmers and community-based) and formal (i.e. public and private) seed systems. Instead of a linear approach, it aims to **enhance pluralism by matching food and seed security to private sector development**. ISSD guides specific interventions in identified seed systems.

ISSD also considers a range of seed entrepreneurs among the different seed systems. Seed entrepreneurs differ by the crops and varieties they address; the assurance for seed quality they provide; the markets they target; and the legal, financial and institutional environment in which they operate. The programme **supports local seed businesses**, strengthens regional and national seed companies, and develops links with international seed companies.

### Stimulating local seed business

In phase I of the programme, 34 farmers' groups were successfully supported in their production of quality seed of both local and improved varieties, with the **focus on crops with high local seed demand**. The majority are legally recognized as seed producer cooperatives and have implemented business plans for the development of sustainable and autonomous quality seed production and marketing. In partnership with strategic programmes and

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partners, such as NGOs, public research entities, universities and public seed enterprises, phase II aims to increase the number of these local seed businesses to 340, in both high and low potential areas.

### **Strengthening the private sector**

Furthermore, working closely with the Ethiopian Seed Growers and Processors Association, the programme aims to assist seed companies to produce and market quality [seed of improved varieties](#) of major food and cash crops, and to market Ethiopia to international companies and investors.

### **Partnerships and innovation**

Through regional multi-stakeholder platforms and public-private partnerships, the programme works on [solving institutional and policy issues](#) that hamper the development of an integrated seed sector. Key to the innovation process is the involvement of universities as knowledge intensive institutions.

Universities generate the evidence base for system interventions and, as independent stakeholders in the seed sector; universities are well positioned to facilitate the learning process for innovation.

Over the past few years, 12 MSc graduates have conducted their research in [topics relevant to local seed business](#). ISSD II aims to share experiences and stimulate learning through literature, audio-visual media and face-to-face.



### **Marja Thijssen – project leader**

Senior Advisor Plant Genetic Resources and Seed Systems

Specialised in cell biology, entomology, tropical crop science, applied plant breeding. Since 1997 involved in training programmes on seed production/technology, applied plant breeding; since 2001 programme coordinator on agro-biodiversity, biotechnology, plant breeding and seed sector development. Genetic resources conservation & management.

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