

# Sesame Business Network Newsletter



Issue 4 August 2014

## 100,000 copies of sesame production guide published



Farmers in Gelego cluster with their sesame production guide

**1**00,000 copies of the sesame production guide entitled “20 Important Steps to Double Yield and Improve Quality of Sesame” have been published and distributed to sesame farmers in northwest Ethiopia. The production guide is published in both Amharic (50,000) and Tigrigna (50,000) languages.

The guide is produced based on previous year’s experiences and existing research. It is produced for farmers and trainers. With its clear pictures and understandable explanations of the 20 steps, it is useful for farmers.

The publication of the field guide was made possible with the support of the Netherlands government and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Several

projects and organisations such as the Sesame Business Network (SBN) Support Programme, Cooperative for Change (C4C)/SNV, Agriterra, CASCAPE, and 2SCALE are working together to support the sesame sector performance improvement.



## Scaling-up improved sesame technologies in northwest Ethiopia

**A**s the rainy season started (June 2014), sesame farmers in northwest Ethiopia have been working hard in their fields to increase their income by getting higher yields. In their endeavors to increase their yield and improve the quality of their sesame, farmers are not alone. The SBN Support Programme, in collaboration with Gondar/Humera Agricultural Research Centers and woreda Offices of Agricultures, have been supporting farmers by doing scaling up of improved sesame production technologies. Among the major activities are signing collaboration agreements, training of trainers, development and distribution of the sesame production guide and demonstrations of improved sesame production technologies in 916 demonstration plots. (Details of these activities are presented on page 2 & 3).

## About this newsletter

The purpose of SBN newsletter is to provide relevant and timely information about the overall activities of the SBN and its support programme.

In this issue we would like to highlight the major activities that have taken place between May and August 2014

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## Scaling-up improved sesame technologies

### Signing collaboration agreements

The SBN Support Programme has signed collaboration agreements with Tigray and Amhara Regions Bureaus of Agriculture (BoA) to roll-out the sesame yield and quality improvement package throughout field demonstrations. The collaboration agreement is for six months (June – November 2014), and concerns the share of human and financial resources.

The contract was signed by Mr. Feseha Bezabih, deputy Bureau head of Tigray Region Bureau of Agriculture, Dr. Shimelash Yeshaneh, Crop Production and Protection Process owner, Amhara region Bureau of Agriculture, and Dr. Geremew Terefe, SBN support programme national coordinator.

### Training of Trainers (ToTs)

The support programme together with Offices of Agriculture and Agricultural Research Centers conducted Training of Trainers for 1084 model farmers and development agents. The ToTs were conducted in two steps. First, a ToT workshop was given to the core team in May 29 and 30, 2014. A total of 44 individuals drawn from Humera and Gondar Agricultural Research Centres, North Gondar and West Tigray zone Agriculture departments, woreda Offices of Agriculture and farmers cooperative unions participated in the first ToT.

Subsequently, these trainers went to their woredas and trained a total of 793 model farmers and 291 development agents. The objective of the trainings and coaching is to increase the awareness, knowledge and skills of sesame farmers on optimal sesame production practices.

In Amhara region, the ToTs were held in six different places (Kokit, Meka, Shinfa, Gelego, Abrhajira and Sanja). In Tigray, ToTs were given in seven places (Adigoshu, Beaker, Adebay, May-kadra, May-gaba, Division-Dansha, Dansha Zuria).

During the training, emphasis was given to the 20 steps of the sesame production



Partial view of the ToTs in Dansha and Quara

guide. Apart from the theoretical aspect of the training, practical lessons were given to trainees on ploughing, row planting and fertiliser applications.

It is believed that the ToTs helped to fill the gap that has been observed in farmers' awareness of improved sesame production technologies. Trainees said that they will share their acquired knowledge and skills with their neighbours and other farmers in their surroundings.

### Demonstration of improved sesame technologies

In order to show the importance of using improved sesame production technologies, demonstration activities have been undertaken in 916 plots (502 in Tigray and 414 in Amhara). The plots are fields of model farmers, and farmer training centers (FTCs).

To realise this, trainings were given, improved quality sesame seeds were provided, and instructions were given to model farmers on how they could run their demo plots. Other necessary materials, such as ropes to measure demo plots, and fertilisers- were also given to farmers.

We plan to reach a total of 75,723 farmers in the 2014 production and marketing season (between June and November 2014). Of these farmers: 39,313 farmers are targeted from Tigray clusters (Kafta Humera, Welkayiet and Tsegedie), and 36,410 from Amhara (Metema, Quara, Tach Armachiho, Mirab Armachiho and Tegedie).

At this very moment land preparation and planting has already been completed and weeding and thinning has been undergoing in most places. The sesame production guide has been used in all demonstration activities.



### ToT Participants' impression

**T**rainees expressed their satisfaction with the trainings. Melkamu Molla, a farmer from Mahdit Kebele, Quara said, "until recently we have been following what our fathers and forefathers were doing. I have never tried row planting for example. I never used improved seed varieties. We did not get more benefits because of the traditional farm practices that we followed. The efforts that we exert and the benefit that we get out of it did not match." He added, "This year, by following the 20 steps that I have learnt, I will try to double my yield. I am determined to get 10 quintals from a hectare."



Melkamu is very happy to have the production guide in his pocket. He said he will keep it just like his holy book. He has an ardent belief that the information in the guide will help improve his own and his family's life.

Dasashe Genet, a development agent in Gelego Kebele said that the ToT will help model farmers to serve as teachers for other farmers. She said she is happy because the fact that model farmers have been trained on the sesame package will make her and her colleagues work easier as these model farmers will also help other farmers. She also likes the production guide: "The production guide is produced nicely. It will easily attract farmers' attention. Even



those farmers who cannot read and write can understand something from the attractive pictures." Dasashe has a strong belief that farmers will double their product this agriculture season.

Mamo Alemayehu, 51, from Mender Amist Division cluster said, "I am very happy with the training. I have learnt that ploughing for one time won't help us more. We should plough our land repeatedly. We should also follow up our land and do the weeding and thinning frequently. I am ready to share what I have got from the training to my neighbours, friends and my cooperative members. I will read the production guide and discuss on the contents with my children."



Frewine Yemane, a development agent, from Wore, Division cluster said, "I have got important lessons from the training. When we finish this training, I and my colleagues are expected to train 73 model farmers. By using the five-in-one grouping system the 73 model farmers will each train five farmers in their neighborhoods. This way we can reach a number of farmers." She added, "the production guide is really interesting. It will help me and my friends do our work properly."



### Rumptstad-2-Wheel Tractor demonstrated

**A**griterra and TGT Enterprise, in collaboration with the SBN Support Programme, had a demonstration road show of a Rumptstad 2-Wheel Tractor.

The demonstrations took place from June 24 to July 05, 2014. It was organised in Shinfa, Aftite, Abderafi, Abrahajira, Marzeneb and Soroka in north Gondar, and Dansha and Humera in west Tigray zone.

Sesame producing farmers, journalists, and representatives from regional and Woreda Bureau/Office of Agriculture and Cooperative Promotion Offices were part of the ploughing demonstration. Participants got the chance to ask questions and discuss about the use and operational capacities, price, guarantee and availability of spare parts of the tractor. A few farmers tried to plough themselves using the tractor.

By using less than 20 liter gas the tractor can plough two hectares of land within eight hours. In manual ploughing (meaning

using a couple of oxen), it takes eight days to plough the same land.

Apart from ploughing the Rumptstad 2-wheel tractor can be used in a wide variety of agricultural practices such as soil tillage, row planting, fertiliser application, weeding,

transporting, threshing, generating electric power and water pumping.

Introducing such tractor for sesame farmers is a step forward to change the sesame sector into mechanisation.



Refref Mohammed, a development agent at Shinfa while trying to use the tractor

## Sesame cuisine around the world: Middle-East

In this column, we highlight the consumption and use of sesame cuisine in the different continents of the world. This edition focuses on the Middle-East. For thousands of years, sesame seeds have been a source of food and oil. Sesame plays a role in different cuisines all over the world. The seed is very nutritious and healthy, and as a nutty flavour that is unique in taste and aroma. It is also rich in proteins, carbohydrates, fatty acids, amino-acids, vitamins, fibre, and anti-oxidants, and is proved to work against diabetes, high-blood pressure, and other diseases.

### Sesame consumption

Sesame forms a very significant part of the Middle-Eastern culture and is an essential ingredient in many Middle Eastern cuisines. Sesame seeds are basis of daily consumption in most Middle-Eastern countries.

**Tahini** is a sesame paste made of ground, hulled sesame seeds, and is used in Middle-Eastern, North African, Greek and Turkish cuisine. It is served as a dip on its own, or as major component of hummus, baba ganoush and halva. Tahini is rich in proteins, has a nutty taste, and is a high energy source. It is available in jars, cans and also in dehydrated form, and can be used in salty and sweet dishes. In the desert of Saudi Arabia, the tahini is very stable and it is important in the diet of the Bedouins. They mix the tahini with ground chick pea kernels making hummus. Baba ganoush is a dish of cooked eggplant (aubergine) mixed with onions, tomatoes, olive oil and various seasonings. Sesame-based tahini is an important ingredient of baba ganoush.

Sesame is also used in sweets and candy, of which **halva** is the most popular sweet. Halva, meaning 'dessert' or 'sweet' in Arab and 'ancient' in Hebrew, is a high energy food that is crumbly and usually made from tahini (50%), added with nut butter, sugar (or honey), and sever other ingredients. In Syria and Lebanon, sesame seeds are mixed with sumac and thyme to make za'atar, a famous mix of spices. In some Middle-Eastern and Asian countries, sesame oil is used to treat diaper rash among babies. As well, in these areas, school-age children have sesame oil swabbed into their noses to protect against air born viruses and bacteria. As nose drops, sesame oil has been used for decades to cure chronic sinusitis.

### Implications for trade

Demand for hulled sesame ready for bakery and confectionary uses is particularly strong; sales of confectionary goods in the Middle East grew at 15% from 2004 to 2007, driven in part by increased consumer discretionary spending and youth demographics ("Middle East Confectionary Market: Opportunities for U.S. Confectionary Exports" 2009). Although the major markets of Ethiopian sesame lie in Asia (China), Ethiopia is exporting sesame to a number of Middle-Eastern countries, such as Israel. Ethiopia's location, at the crossroads between Africa, the Middle-East, and Asia makes it geographically well positioned to extend and intensify its export markets in these regions.

Very recently, Selam Farmers' Cooperative union, together with the Cooperative for Change (C4C) project (SNV), a partner of the SBN support programme, has managed to get a contract with Israeli food processor Prince Tahini. This company produces whole, organic, natural and seasoned Tahini.

Ingredients	Directions
8 ounces (about 1 cup) sesame seeds 1/4 cup sesame or olive oil, more if needed Salt, to taste	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread sesame seeds on a parchment-paper-lined cookie sheet, and bake for 6 minutes. Mix and respreads sesame seeds, and return to oven for 6 to 8 minutes more, or until sesame seeds are fragrant and golden brown. Immediately transfer toasted seeds to a separate bowl to prevent carryover cooking.</li> <li>2. Add sesame seeds to the bowl of a food processor and grind for 1 minute, or until seeds have broken down. While processor is on, drizzle in olive oil, and continue to grind for 1 or 2 minutes more, or until a smooth paste forms. If mixture is too dry, then add more olive oil, 1 teaspoon at a time. Season to taste. Transfer tahini to a mason jar, and store in the fridge for up to one month.</li> </ol>



<b>Sesame tahini</b> 	<b>Baba ganoush with sesame</b> 
<b>Halva, made from sesame tahini</b> 	<b>Za'atar spices with sesame</b> 

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## SBN annual national workshop held at Gondar

SBN's annual workshop was held at Teye hotel, Gondar on May 15 and 16. The workshop marked the first anniversary of the launch of the SBN support programme.

The workshop brought together more than 140 stakeholders from the private and public sesame and wider agricultural bodies, such as primary cooperatives, unions, ECX, proximity service providers (such as Agricultural Research Institutes, Bureaus of Agriculture, Cooperative Promotion Offices, banks, Micro-finance Institutions, PLCs administrators from Amhara and Tigray regions), as well as SBN partner projects.

The objectives of the two days' workshop were sharing results and experiences of the first year, and looking ahead to the 2014-2015 sesame production and marketing season. It was also aimed at networking, exchanging, and building business linkages between sesame stakeholders in the region, and at addressing sector strategic topics with all participants involved.

The workshop was officially opened by Dr. Eyasu Abrha, director general of the Tigray Agricultural Research Center. In his opening speech, Dr. Eyasu emphasised on the importance of giving attention to the challenges of the sesame sector and the need of multi-dimensional approach and multi-stakeholder participation to solve them.



After the official opening the workshop started by different presentations. The first day focused on sharing the major activities and results of the SBN support programme of this first year. The presentations elaborated on the results of sesame production demonstrations, and results of the studies on yields, postharvest losses, credit and production costs. In addition, SBN partner projects and organisations presented their sesame and agriculture-related activities. In the sesame business hall, various SBN stakeholders engaging in different activities in the sesame sector promoted their sesame-related products and services to the audience.

Dr. Adugna Wakjira deputy director general of Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) participated in the workshop. In his brief remark, Dr Adugna mentioned the efforts that have been made by regional and federal agricultural research institutes to use new technologies so



Participants, attending the workshop

as to increase productivity and quality of sesame and to be competent in the international market.

The second day of the workshop began by having a short visit to Ambasel Trading House PLC at Gondar, which engages in sesame cleaning, hulling and making Tahini. After the visit, the 'Sesame yield and quality improvement guide' was officially launched and presented to the participants, followed by a presentations on sesame related research output and on possibilities for stakeholders to collaborate with the SBN support programme, through collaboration agreements and the innovation fund. The rest of the second day focused on how to jointly tackle the most important strategic challenges for the sesame sector.

The main challenges identified were:

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

After working in different multi-stakeholder groups, possible solutions and directions were suggested to solve the challenges and improve the performance of the sesame sector.

The workshop was officially closed by Mr. Feseha Bezabih, deputy head of Tigray Bureau of Agriculture. Mr. Feseha emphasized the importance of collaboration and aligning the efforts together so as to bring the desired change. He closed the workshop giving gratitude to the government of Netherlands, the SBN support programme staff members, Gondar town administration, Ambasel Trading House PLC, and all participants.



Participants indicated that they enjoyed the workshop by learning important lessons from the presentations and discussions, and through getting the chance for networking, a company visit and match-making.

A more detailed workshop report, as well as all presentations and a selection of workshop pictures, can be found on the SBN website: [www.sbnethiopia.org](http://www.sbnethiopia.org), and on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/SBNEthiopia](https://www.facebook.com/SBNEthiopia).



Some of the workshop participants



### In the picture

In the picture entertains the profile of individuals, cooperatives, unions, and/or any other service provider organisations in the sesame business clusters in northwest Ethiopia.

#### Fana Limat multipurpose Cooperative: one of the successful cooperatives in West Tigray

Situated in May-kadra town, 28 km from Humera, Fana multipurpose cooperative is one of the most successful cooperatives in western Tigray zone. The cooperative is among the founding members of Setit Union, and is a key stakeholder in the May-kadra sesame business cluster.

Fana cooperative was established in 1997 by 70 farmers. Currently, it has 2374 members (1733 male and 641 female) who are engaged in sesame and sorghum production and marketing. The cooperative has 10 permanent staff members (7 men and 4 women).

The cooperatives' main business is buying, marketing and selling sesame. During the last production and marketing season (2013), the cooperative collected 17,734.20 quintals of sesame from its members and sold 15,285.30 quintals to Setit Union, the Tigray Marketing Federation and Selit Hulling for a total price of about 60,000,000 ETB. The remaining 2,448.90 quintals is still the cooperative's store.

The cooperative has a capital of 3,293,403.82 ETB, and has an office, store and loading car.

Besides sesame sales and marketing, Fana cooperative offers a number of services for its members. It has a loan and credit service that provides farmers with credit during the peak production season (during ploughing, weeding, and harvesting). The cooperative also gives information about the local sesame market to members, and - together with development organisations - arranges training on improving productivity, management of post-harvest losses and storage. It provides agricultural inputs (fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides), and some construction materials (iron sheets, nails).



Mr. Hayelom Abera, chairperson of Fana multipurpose cooperative

The cooperative has a good relationship with the company Selit Hulling. Mr. Hayelom Abera, chairperson of the cooperative, stated: "The provision of bags, chemical supplies, agronomic training, and storage service are among the services that our members receive from Selit Hulling." He added, "1000 members of the cooperative are permanent member of Selit Hulling and these members supply their organic sesame product to Selit Hulling through the cooperative. This year the cooperative sold out 12,247.54 quintals of sesame for Selit Hulling."

Every year the cooperative shares its dividend with its members. Seventy percent is distributed to its members (based on their financial share) whereas thirty percent has been invested in the cooperatives' overall performance. In 2014, the highest share for an individual member was 35,000 ETB.

Nigussie Hailu, 37, is a male member of Fana cooperative and produces sesame and sorghum. Last production season, Nigussie received 26,367 ETB dividend from the cooperatives. He indicates to benefit a lot from the



cooperative: "I get a credit service for a reasonable cost and at the right time in the production season. I put my products in the cooperative's store and sell it at a time that is convenient to me. Had I not been a member, I wouldn't have got good market for my products."

Azeb Girmay, 43 years old, is a female member of the cooperative since four years. She got her share of 8000 ETB last year. She said: "Because of the cooperatives' credit service, I can escape from being exploited by the informal money lenders who ask unreasonable amounts of interest for the credit that they lend us. Whenever we have problems such as pest; our first place to visit is our cooperative."



To Mr. Hayelom, the main reasons for the success are the strong leadership and committees of the cooperative, and the sense of ownership among the cooperatives' members. The cooperative has received different certificates from a number of governmental and non-governmental organisations.



### ECX Sesame Transactions: from March- June 2014

Between March and June 2014, sesame trading in Amhara and Tigray regions at the ECX continued with relatively high volumes as compared to these months in 2013. Grade 2, 3, 4 and under grade (UG) were traded most in volume. Metema, Gondar and Humera warehouses delivered a total of about 24,890 metric tonnes in March this year. From April- June, 2014 smaller quantities of sesame were traded, yet they were still bigger as compared to the transactions in these months last year, as can be seen in table 1.

The trends show that sesame trade is not only at Humera anymore but it also occurs at other places. In 2013, the majority of sesame traded at the ECX came from Humera warehouse. In 2014 sesame from Humera warehouse is still being traded the most but the share of both Metema and Gondar trade has increased substantially.

#### Trends per grade

Generally speaking, there is a rise of sesame trading in grade 2, 3, and 4, but lower UG grades. In all the four months of 2014, it was Grade 3 that was traded the most with a share of at least 52%. In 2013, the share of Grade 3 did not exceed 41% in any of the months from March up to June. Compared to June 2013, the trading of grade 3 sesame increased by 80% this year. This is because of an increase from Gondar warehouse. The most remarkable drop of quantity per grade is that of Grade UG. As shown in table 2, in 2013, about 5,200 metric tonnes of sesame were traded but in the same months of 2014 the quantity declined to less than 1,000 metric tonnes.

#### Trends per warehouse

In 2013 more sesame was traded from the Humera warehouse. Metema and Gondar warehouse managed to supply more in 2014. The overall trade of the four most important grades went up by 47.7% with increments from Metema, Gondar and Humera of 66.4%, 73.7% and 18.8% respectively. Despite the major increase of trade from Metema warehouse, Metema's Grade 2 transactions were relatively small in 2014. In May 2014, the share of Grade 2 from Metema on the total Grade 2 trade in that month, just reached about 3.6%.

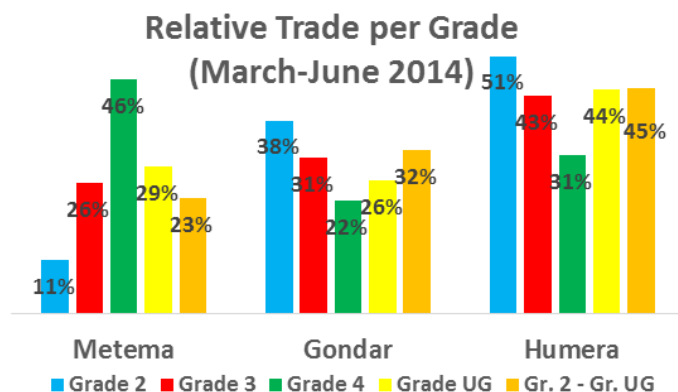
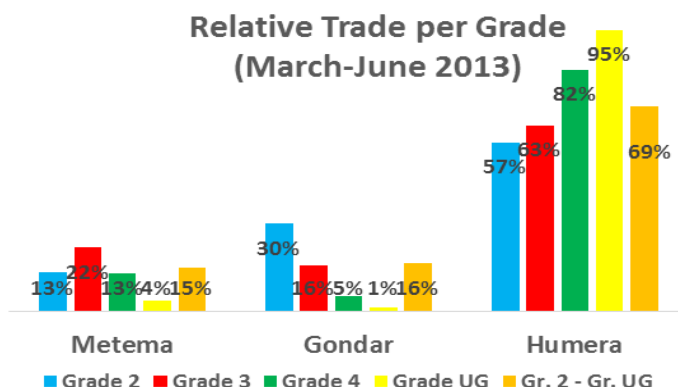
In 2013 Grade 4 and Grade UG trade came predominantly from Humera warehouse, contributing 81% and 95% respectively in the Months March - June. In March - June 2014, Humera Grade 4 and UG trade only accounted for 31% and 44% respectively. In fact, the overall trade from Humera warehouse dropped from 69% to 45% which indicates that other Metema and Gondar warehouse are attractive and available for trade at the end of Q2 2014 as well.

Table 1. Sesame sales from Metema, Gondar and Humera warehouses for 2013 and 2014.

	2013	2014	Percentage Change
March	8,450	24,890	66.1% ↑
April	11,800	14,890	20.8% ↑
May	8,850	11,410	22.4% ↑
June	3,200	10,530	69.6% ↑

Table 2. Sesame trade per grade; March - June 2013/2014

	Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade UG	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
March	3,100	7,300	2,600	15,000	1,300	2,250	1,450	340
April	4,100	5,750	4,100	7,800	1,850	1,200	1,750	140
May	2,400	3,400	3,600	6,800	1,550	950	1,300	260
June	800	3,100	1,200	6,200	500	1,000	700	230
Total	10,400	19,500	11,500	35,800	5,200	5,400	5,200	970
	46.7% ↑		67.9% ↑		3.7% ↑		436.1% ↓	



## Government amends the Sesame and White Pea Beans Transaction Regulation

**O**n April 28, 2014, the Ethiopian government passed amendments to the 'Sesame and White Pea Beans Transaction Council of Ministers Regulation, No. 178/2010' under 'Regulation No. 307/2014.'

The promulgation of this proclamation laid a legal ground for a new domestic trading of sesame and white pea beans. The most important amendment for the sesame sector is that processors are now allowed to directly buy sesame from the spot markets. The amendment states that "the transaction of sesame or white pea beans at primary transaction centers shall be carried out only between producers and suppliers or producers and processors."

The change can not only foster the process of domestic trading of the two commodities, but can also provide farmers with better market opportunities as it allows more buyers at the spot market level. It also paves the way for processors to intensify their value-addition activities.

The amended proclamation further states that the transaction of sesame or white pea beans at Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) shall be carried out based on the ECX rules.

## SBN Support Programme staff members trained on MFarm



SBN staff members in the MFarm training

**F**rom May 18 to May 22, 2014 SBN Support Programme staff members were trained by the 2SCALE project on MFarm. MFarm is an integrated and customisable ICT platform designed to help stakeholders who are active in agricultural value chain. The platform states to enable stakeholders to communicate efficiently, to establish and maintain business relationships, and to manage the flow of goods and services.

The SBN administration and finance staff participated in an alternative training programme focusing on 2Scale grant and finance mechanisms.

## Upcoming activities of the SBN Support Programme

- Follow-up of the demonstration activities
- Organising field days
- Showing mobile cinemas
- Action planning for the newly established clusters
- Conducting research on labour in SBN

### Contact us :

For more information, questions and comments you can contact us through: [sbnethiopia@gmail.com](mailto:sbnethiopia@gmail.com)

More information about the SBN and its support programme can also be found on the SBN website:

<http://www.sbnethiopia.org/> You can also find us on our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SBNEthiopia>

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