

## **ONION SEED STUDY/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The annual demand for fresh onion, both for Ethiopia and the region is growing. However, at present the supply is still erratic and in some instances imports (e.g. from Sudan) have been necessary to satisfy the national demand for fresh onion.

On the other hand, the onion prices are not always attractive / cost-covering for farmers. In particular during the harvest-season when substantial quantities of fresh onions are offered for sale this is the case.

Recognizing the potential for onion production in the region, the Agri-Business-Induced Economic Growth (Agro-BIG) Programme, has selected onion as one of the crops / Value Chains. Pilot woredas are Mecha and Fogera in Amhara Region.

Recently the Agro-BIG team has carried out a Value Chain Analysis for onion. One of the main findings was that the lack of seeds (in quality and quantity) was a major constraint for improved and increased production. Unlike some other crops, the seed system for vegetables is not yet well developed. Therefore the programme commanded a specific study focusing on the onion **seed** Value Chain. By collecting detailed information on the seed VC, the programme will be in a better position to advise on adequate activities and measures for the reduction of the specific bottle-necks. The present study concentrates on the two pilot woredas, Mecha and Fogera. However, as the VC actors get beyond these boundaries, e.g. when selling to middlemen / traders who sell it in Addis, the study is not limited to these two woredas. The present report presents the results of the onion seed Value Chain. As this report is a complementary study to the one on the onion Value Chain in general, information available in the latter one is not repeated.

The onion seed Value Chain seems to be relatively short and not so complicated. Despite this it is not necessarily very transparent. When it comes to the direct actors, it is as yet not very clear who exactly plays which role and who benefits how much. Farmers mention the lack of quality seed but at the same time they do not yet seem prepared to pay a (substantial) higher price for quality seed.

Most seed growers appear to be quite informal, and are neither well organised, nor very well linked to the market. There seems to be ample room for the enhancement of application of good agricultural practices. Also cost-calculation as part of the business planning can be strengthened.

So far the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) has released six improved onion varieties. However these are not yet widely available and ANRS is one of the regions where farmers face difficulties in obtaining them.

The certification of the produced seeds remains a concern. As most of the seed is produced from seeds from unknown sources, the options for certification are limited not to say zero.

Taking these findings into account as well as the focus and objectives of the programme, some key recommendations have been formulated.

