

QUARTERLY REPORT JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2014/SUMMARY

The Agro-business-Induced Economic Growth (Agro-BIG) Programme is an Agricultural Development programme using the Value Chain Development Approach to develop selected agricultural value chains in Amhara National Regional State (ANRS), more specifically in Mecha and Fogera *Woredas*.

This report captures the progress of the programme in the third quarter (July-September) of this fiscal year. Following this summary and introduction section, programme accomplishments will be discussed by component. The second section focuses on programme management and outlines both the physical and financial accomplishments of the programme. This section also describes the major M&E activities performed at all levels. Updates on the constraints and opportunities are bullet pointed in the third section while the last section draws conclusions and recommendations. The annexes provide detailed information about programme budget utilization, a follow up on the annual work plan and Technical Assistance provided to Agro-BIG programme implementing offices.

Facilitate collaboration: During the reporting period an assessment to identify potential partners has been conducted in Fogera *Woreda*. Accordingly, partner organizations and businesses have been identified. A forum which gathered all these identified business and supporting government organizations has been organized in Debre Tabor town. The forum was attended by a total of 84 (6 female) participants. Preparations are underway to carry out a similar activity in Mecha *Woreda*.

Seed supply: About 35,000 mini tubers (around 4 quintals) of improved potato variety called Gudene is produced under screen house and they are stored at diffused light stores for sprouting. Two improved varieties namely Belete and Gudene are under multiplication using insect proof screen houses and they are at good vegetative stage which will be harvested soon.

Skill training: Skill training has been organized in both Mecha and Fogera for four days for selected potato and onion wholesale and retail traders and few emerging processors at Dangila and Debre Tabor towns, respectively. In Mecha, 17 participants (7 female) while in Fogera 33 participants (10 female) attended the training.

Experience sharing visits: KIP office has organized and conducted a day long experience sharing visit to selected farmers (13) and field agronomists (12) to the Guna mountain area

where seed potato production is dominant. The objective is to create sustainable market linkages between these seed potato producers (as suppliers) and ware potato producers in Mecha.

Public sector capacity building: Having gone through the government procurement process, 25 SUZUKI motorbikes (i.e. 14 for Fogera and 11 for Mecha) are procured and handed over to the respective WoFEDs. The motor bikes are distributed based on priorities set by the *Woreda* SC. The objective is just to partially address the transportation problem encountered by partner implementing bodies.

Access to Finance and Financial Services:

- A total of 40 concept notes were received for Agro-BIG's requested contribution of 40.5 million Birr. 12 concept notes for a contribution of 9.1 million Birr by Agro-BIG were approved by the *Woreda* steering committees for the next stage (i.e., preparation of full proposals).
- A total of 100 Value Chain Fund concept notes were received for Agro-BIG's requested contribution of 6.2 million Birr. Of which, 83 concept notes for a total contribution by Agro-BIG of 3.9 million Birr were approved by the *Woreda* Steering Committees for the next stage of preparation of full proposals.
- A total of 20 Matching Grant Fund concept notes were received for Agro-BIG's requested contribution of 27.9 million Birr. Of which, 10 concept notes were approved by the *Woreda* Steering Committees for the next stage of preparation of full proposals.
- Agreements between Agro-BIG and ACSI as well as ACSI and the technology provider, MOSS have been signed for introduction of M-birr mobile money transfer. The MOSS team has started the M-birr implementation programme which will last for 14 weeks and end in January 2015.
- Preparations have been made to support ACSI's Training and Research Centre to implement several training programmes involving farmer family financial literacy, management upgrading of Rural Savings and Credit Cooperatives, product development in savings promotion/life insurance for farmers, stakeholder awareness of VC finance and AgroBIG grants as well as exposure visit by ACSI staff on value chain finance.
- ACSI and Agro-BIG have already started preparations of Loan Fund Guidelines to be used for training of ACSI branch staff and to inform potential applicants.

Budget reallocation: In the reporting quarter, the Agro-BIG Team reviewed the last eight months accomplishment. The team has followed a very rigorous procedure to come up with

suggestions for budget revision/re-allocation. The budget re-allocation proposal was presented to the Supervisory Board on September 18 meetings and approved.