Institutionalizing crowd sourcing and PVS Systems in Amhara Region

The integrated seed sector development project Amhara unit supports the seed sector more than seven years and set the basis to maintain process of continuous improvement in the sector leading to sustainable agricultural development. Moreover, the project improves smallholder farmer's access to and use of quality seed of new and preferred varieties through crowdsourcing approach to sustainably increase agricultural productivity. However, issue of sustainability subsequent to the project termination period has to be considered and embedding strategies for stockholders and key partners has to be designed. In this aspect stakeholder's/partners willingness to keep track of the experience as of donors or innovators is a paramount factor that has to be considered and needs much effort to bring them on desk for discussion and to develop ownership.

Considering this, the integrated seed sector development project Amhara unit develops a strategy to institutionalize crowd sourcing and participatory varietal selection systems in to a relevant stakeholders one year ahead from its termination period. This strategy helps to closely follow each of the activities and give support any time and assure institutionalization. Hence, at the beginning a one day workshop was conducted with the involvement of Research center directors, university research and community vice president's and BoA deputy heads and other relevant stakeholders. Crowdsourcing and PVs experiences of 2017 and 2018 shared, discussion conducted on lessons brought and challenges hinder to implement crowdsourcing and PVs activities.

The eye's break discussion session was challenging in attainment the desired goal of taking over the crowd sourcing and participatory varietal selection activities into relevant stakeholders. Initially, most of the relevant institutions appear in reluctant to take over the activity and scale up further without the project's intervention. With great initiative of the project and BoA consensus built on supporting the stakeholders through small grant and capacity building activities until they stand alone and keeping the experience independently in the upcoming years. However, number of farmers to manage, budget to cascade the activities were the major challenges mentioned in the preliminary workshop. Then, universities and research centers take the responsibilities of cascading the activities with diminutive support from ISSD until the end of this year. BoA also promised to support universities and research centers through uplifting crowdsourcing activities in to more woredas aimed to fruitfully cascade the activities and scale up at large.

Based on the initial workshop conducted at Bahirdar, a prerequisite session designed to share seed extension woredas experience for universities and research center focal person and experts. The system twitches through discussion with relevant stakeholders on the issue which needs to embed, the experience conveyed by ISSD, recommended steps to easily scale up and willingness to own the project a head and others were the major points. Next, training on ClimMob software, crowdsourcing, PVS and gender for University and Research center focal persons were conducted as a means to institutionalizing CS and PVS. Then, ISSD Amhara unit signed memorandum of understanding with research centers and universities subsequent to planning together next year's crowd sourcing and PVS activities.

Then, the unit organized a training workshop with the involvement of PMU aimed to familiarize the overall headway of Cs and PVs, practical training on ClimMob software for University and Research center focal persons. Sharing the two years (2017-2018) experience of CS and PVS, discussion on best lessons and challenges to implement, training on how to design Trails for CS and PVS and gender issues were the prime agendas addressed in the session.

The training workshop was opened by Dr Dereje Ayalew, Regional program manager of integrated seed sector development Amhara Unit. On his opening remark, the following outcomes in the training were introduced at the start:

The key expected outcomes were;

- ✓ Shared two years result and lessons of Cs and PVs for university and research focal persons
- ✓ Trained crowdsourcing, PVS, gender and ClimMob software to dependently upload crowdsourcing data
- ✓ Plan together next year's Cs and PVs activities
- ✓ Sign memorandum of understanding with relevant stakeholders
- ✓ Discuss on technical backstopping anticipated from ISSD

The facilitator combines straight talk where concepts have to understand with clarity, and allowing questions or issue for discussions to be aired during the same period. Use of visuals, power point presentations and practical assignments in the context of our seed producers were the major preceding's. Moreover, the practice asks participants to bring up real situations to dependently advance crowdsourcing and participatory variety.

Prior implemented Woredas while sharing experiences of Cs and PVS ***Partial view of workshop participants***

The overall preceding's to embed and the workshop was successful in attaining the desired goal of embedding crowd sourcing and PVs activities with intensive training on layout and design practice on ClimMob software, plan together next year's crowdsourcing and PVs activities and consensus built on the technical backstopping anticipated from ISSD.ISSD assured to support facilitation of access to seed and easing farmers training while partners anticipated to fully accomplish the planned activities with consultation of the project. A total of 25 participants drown from WoA, universities, research centers, BENEFIT projects attended the embedding workshop.