
REPORT
***ISD/BVAT INCEPTION WORKSHOP ON
ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE***

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ISD/BvAT INCEPTION WORKSHOP ON ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

BACKGROUND OF AND RATIONALE FOR THE WORKSHOP

AGRICULTURE AND THE CHALLENGE OF FEEDING MILLIONS IN TODAY'S WORLD

Agriculture, a source of livelihood for millions of people the world over, is still at the core of a heated debate on its challenges and opportunities to feed the ever-increasing world population. This has become more complicated with the advent of climate change wreaking deadly havoc and the urgent issue of shrinking natural resources. In 2008, the Economist's food-price index peaked, being at its highest level since it began reporting on prices in 1845. At the same time, there were around 800 million people – mostly women and children – severely underfed and malnourished, with their families unable to buy food although there was enough food produced in the world as a whole to provide everyone with at least one adequate meal a day. By 2012, there were more than 925 million people still unable to buy food. The Economist stated "The world's poor have been priced out of the food market, throwing nearly a billion people who already had insufficient access to food into acute crisis, most of these in Sub-Saharan Africa".

Ethiopia is among the most challenged countries when initiating policy dialogue on agriculture. The population is currently around 90 million and projected to reach around 174 million in the next forty years. The country is among the most vulnerable to climate change, and still is near the top of the list of food insecure countries in Sub Saharan Africa.

THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE

In most developing countries, smallholder agriculture remains the source of livelihood and food supply for the majority of the population. No farmer is too small to be ignored as smallholder-based agriculture is here to stay and will mostly be carried out in fragile environments susceptible to climate change. The paradox is that agriculture, characterized by smallholder farming with an average cultivated area of around 0.9 hectares per household in Ethiopia, is the engine driving the economy and the biggest employer. Various agricultural policies and strategies, including the current five year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) due to end in 2015, confirm smallholder farming as the backbone to ensure sustained and equitable economic growth in the country.

The year 2008 stands out as a significant turning point in the recognition of the importance of the role of smallholder farmers in national food security by major development organizations. This was largely in response to the official publication of IAASTD (International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development) in Johannesburg in April 2008. The Global report is supported by five Sub-Global Summaries for Decision Makers, including one for Sub-Saharan Africa.

However, increasing productivity to sustain the ever increasing population is a goal yet to be achieved. That is why finding a viable agricultural system that ensures food security in times of changing climate, and in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner, has become an imperative. The *Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD)*, established in 1996, is one of the pioneer NGOs to work on promoting ecological agriculture with smallholder farming communities in four regions in Ethiopia. These are Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR. ISD aims to enhance productivity by introducing and using ecological farming principles and methods. ISD has also been in

the forefront in shaping the national discourse on EOA (Ecological Organic Agriculture) in Ethiopia as well as at the regional African level.

CONSENSUS ON THE NEED TO REPLACE EXISTING AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES WITH VIABLE AND INNOVATIVE AGRO-ECOLOGICAL METHODS

Presently, there is growing consensus among international bodies dealing with food and agriculture, including the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), that high external input chemical-intensive agriculture is an outdated concept. Instead, building knowledge and support for smallholder farmers to use agro-ecological methods are deemed to be the way forward. The IAASTD report mentioned earlier states that *"...rather than pursue industrial farming models, 'agro-ecological' methods provide the most viable means to enhance global [food] security, especially in light of climate change. These include implementing practical scientific research based on traditional seed varieties and local farming practices"*. Other key publications produced by UN agencies (e.g. UNEP-UNCTAD) in 2008 and 2010 focus on the role of ecological organic agriculture and the importance of smallholder farmers as the actors in this activity. In a related study on the issue entitled *Agro-ecology and the Right to Food*, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Shutter, concluded that *"small-scale farmers can double food production within 10 years in critical regions by using ecological methods"*.

EXPLORING THE VIABILITY OF ENGAGING IN EOA IN AFRICA

In addition to various UN-related initiatives on EOA, the leading regional organization in Africa, the African Union (AU), has also recognized both the urgency and necessity of pursuing ecological agriculture and has, since 2008 embarked on a series of initiatives in this regard (See Presentation: 2: Sue Edwards).

The question of whether agro-ecological farming is able to feed the needs of the growing populations in Africa needs to be fully addressed. The perception is that ecological organic agriculture results in lower crop yields and thus will require more land in order to produce enough. However, there are now proven field management/agronomy methods for eco-intensification that result in increased production on the same small fields. This is an approach with co-benefits for farmers, the environment and the future of food security for all; the most critical inputs being knowledge and skills coupled with local policy support. It is thus necessary to explore various issues regarding the viability of engaging in organic agriculture in Africa and implementing a climate resilient and productive agricultural system that can feed African populations.

INCEPTION OF AN ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC INITIATIVE FOR AFRICA

In November 2008, ISD, in collaboration with the AU, FAO, UNCTAD, TWN (Third World Network), SwedBio and SSNC (Swedish Society of Nature Conservation), the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture and Tigray Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources, organized an international workshop on Ecological Agriculture at the African Union Conference Center in Addis Ababa. This meeting could be considered as the beginning of the Ecological Organic Agriculture movement in East Africa and Ethiopia.

In May 2011, a group of like-minded NGOs from six Sub Saharan African countries, including ISD and the AU, met in Thika, Kenya, and developed a Concept Note for an Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative for Africa under six pillars. Starting from August 2013, ISD initiated a three-year project on EOA with support from the Swedish Society of Nature Conservation (SSNC). The project encompasses the six pillars, namely: Research, Training and Extension (Pillar 1); Information and Communication

(Pillar 2); Value Chain and Market Development (Pillar 3); Networking and Partnerships (Pillar 4); Policy and Program Development (Pillar 5); and Institutional Capacity Building (Pillar 6).

ISD/BvAT NATIONAL INCEPTION WORKSHOP ON EOA

In order to explore the opportunities, along with the surrounding national and international challenges in pursuit of bringing a socially just, ecologically sound, climate resilient and productive agricultural system that can feed Ethiopia's growing population and transform the country's economy, a national inception workshop on EOA, organized by ISD and BvAT, was held at Ellily Hotel in Addis Ababa on April 29, 2013. The workshop brought together a total of 33 persons, including representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture (MoA), Environment and Forest (MEF), and Education (MoE), the Agriculture Transformation Agency (ATA), national research institutes and agriculture extension centres, academia, the House of People's Representatives, farmers, ISD partner organizations in Africa, and international donors/supporting agencies, and interested NGOs, as well as senior staff of ISD. Resource persons from ISD, MEF, BvAT, and the Civil Service University made presentations which were followed by question-and-answer sessions, discussion and group work.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

1. Launching of the 3 and 5 year ISD-led EOA projects, supported by SSNC (Swedish Society of Nature Conservation) and SDC (Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation).
2. Establishment of common understanding and clarity on the generic National and Regional discourses on EOA, with its challenges and opportunities.
3. Establishment of a common understanding on the national policy and legal provisions required to promote EOA in Ethiopia.
4. Establishment of a common understanding on the linkages among GTP (Growth and Transformation Plan), CRGE (Climate Resilient Green Economy) and EOA and their implications for improved smallholder farming and food security in Ethiopia.
5. Creation of a platform for future networking and linkage on EOA between Ethiopian stakeholders, key actors and supporting partners.

MORNING SESSION

WELCOMING REMARKS

Mr Gizaw Gebremariam, ISD Program Manager, formally opened the meeting by welcoming the participants to the workshop and apologizing for the delay in starting the programme, which he put down to local transportation problems. He hoped that the ensuing discussions would improve understanding on the increasing importance of the role of EOA in Ethiopia's agricultural sector.

The participants were requested to introduce themselves, stating which organization they represented. Mr Gizaw then introduced Dr Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher, Special Advisor to the Minister in MEF, to deliver the keynote address.

PRESENTATION 1: "THE ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA"

Dr Tewolde Berhan presented the keynote paper entitled 'The Ecological Organic Agriculture Movement in Ethiopia'. At the outset, he thanked ISD not only for organizing the workshop, but also for inviting him to share his thoughts on the issue with the assembled participants. He noted that

without financial support, ISD and its partners would not have been able to organize the workshop and attempt to promote EOA. He thus took the opportunity to express his appreciation to the Swedish Society of Nature Conservation (SSNC) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for their financial assistance.

The presenter stressed that the workshop was just the beginning of a very important, continuing effort to increase awareness among the Ethiopian public regarding EOA, as well as provide vital input into the continuing planning and implementation of the country's economy along a climate resilient and green path of development. He asked, rhetorically, why there was the need to worry about climate resilience and a green path of development. The term "climate resilience", he said, indicates that we have to ensure that the economy we build will not shatter because of the growing impacts of climate change. The term "green" means that our economic development activities minimize the overall generation of greenhouse gases, as the latter increase both the speed and final outcome of climate change. Dr Tewolde further asked why we should worry about growing climate change if the economy we build is climate resilient. This is because resilience is feasible only within limits. In other words, there is a limit to building up resilience to climate change if the latter were to continue changing indefinitely. If the change becomes very big, withstanding it will not be possible, whatever measures are taken. That is why, the presenter emphasized, we must make our economic development as climate resilient as possible, and why, at the same time, we must reduce the rate of climate change as much as possible. Dr Tewolde noted that this is the reason Ethiopia is working towards realization of a middle-income economy while its growth path is becoming entirely green (with net emissions of greenhouse gases expected to be reduced to zero by 2025). He asked rhetorically if this is achievable, concluding that it is.

Dr Tewolde went on to examine the global situation, intimating that the global electric power generating sector is the biggest emitter of atmospheric greenhouse gases, as most of it comes from fossil fuels. However Ethiopia's electricity in the grid, he noted, is already being generated entirely from renewable energy consisting of hydropower, now also being supplemented by both wind power and geothermal power. Even so, he pointed out, less than 5% of the hydropower potential of Ethiopia is harnessed. Activities such as harnessing wind power and geothermal power began only in the last few years, with solar power hardly touched. Admittedly, the presenter said, most of the people in Ethiopia are located in rural areas which the electricity grid has not yet reached. However, it is expanding fast, and Ethiopia's renewable energy potential, when fully harnessed, will be able to supply sufficient electricity to all people in the country, as well as neighboring countries and beyond. Dr Tewolde added that a network of railway lines is already under construction, and that electric trains would soon also be a feature in the streets of Addis Ababa.

The presenter indicated that some sectors of economic development such as production of cement, will necessarily grow only by emitting the greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide. Even though the cement producing sector is being made to reduce carbon dioxide emission, it will always emit an amount of the gas with the expansion of cement production activities.

Dr Tewolde informed the gathering that currently, agriculture in Ethiopia is the economic sector that emits greenhouse gases the most. He said that in the context of climate change, the promotion of EOA will thus play a major role in the country's future development, as it makes the economic sector more resilient to the impacts of climate change while contributing to a reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases. Even though, the presenter said, domestic animals, particularly the ruminants, will

always emit greenhouse gases, with appropriate breeding, feeding and management of domestic animals, particularly usage of their wastes as inputs into EOA, the wastes will not only enrich the soil but also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by retaining carbon as humus in the soil; the carbon that would have become the greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide and methane.

The presenter then touched upon the subject of afforestation and reforestation, pointing out the relationship or linkage with climate change. He stated that increasing forests increases the vegetation cover of the soil, particularly its standing biomass. A high vegetation cover removes a large amount of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and stores it in wood while returning carbon to the soil in decomposing leaves and stems. He pointed out that forest cover in Ethiopia, which had decreased to below 3% of the land area in the 1990s, has now increased to an estimated 11% and will continue to increase. The process of checking the accuracy of information gleaned through aerial photographs by comparing it to sample forest plots is currently underway and will soon provide a reliable map of Ethiopia's forest cover. Dr Tewolde said that many people think that agricultural productivity and trees do not go together. This belief, he said, has been particularly strong in the country's recent past. It is true, he admitted, that a dense forest reduces light which herbaceous crops, including both cereals and legumes, need for effective photosynthesis, and thus for food production. However, when there is no tree cover at all, he stressed, soil erodes fast and crops find nowhere to grow. Soil erosion is highest on steep slopes, and Ethiopia being a mountainous country, most of the land is situated on steep slopes. In addition to impoverishing the land and eventually eliminating agriculture, soil erosion also destroys infrastructure. As he had indicated earlier that hydropower is very important for Ethiopia's electric energy supply, soil erosion results in dams being filled up with silt, thereby reducing electricity generation. That is why he regards EOA as essential for continuing food production and even industrialization as it aims to protect and return carbon to the soil.

Dr Tewolde stated that agriculture is at present Ethiopia's main economic sector, with industrialization in its early stages. However, even after industrialization has overtaken agriculture as the main cash-earning economic sector, people will still want food for nourishment. Prospects for importing food are diminishing with time, he said, and thus the agriculture sector will always continue as the most indispensable of all the country's economic sectors. The presenter added that, to perpetually continue producing food, agriculture must remain in harmony with the ecosystem, and that it is the need for this harmony that demands for agriculture to become ecological. To continue being ecological, it has to be organic, and that is why we want our agriculture to become ecologically organic. In the last few decades, the presenter stated, organic agriculture has shunned all synthetic agrochemical inputs. Indeed, he emphasized, if an agricultural system is in complete harmony with the ecosystem in which it is functioning, the nutrient cycling will maximize the plant nutrients required by crops to enable them to maximize their productivity. Given human mishandling, especially in the last half century, he said, there has been much disruption of the nutrient cycling in the ecosystem. Dr. Tewolde said that he sees no harm in putting artificial fertilizers into the soil to restore the ecosystem's maximized nutrient cycling. However, he also stated that he regards this input as akin to giving medication to a sick person, and understood the organic movement's rejection of agrochemicals. The presenter noted that EOA and the organic agriculture movement are not incompatible. He would certainly recommend the elimination of costly third-party, i.e. externally controlled, organic agricultural certification, and replace it by an internal, fair and affordable guarantee system, that should also be accepted by external organic markets.

Dr Tewolde told the workshop that he envisions a sustainable agricultural system in the indefinite future as one which manages the agricultural ecosystem and transforms itself into a system that has an in-built, self-maximizing nutrient cycle. However, he lamented the fact that most of Ethiopia's agricultural ecosystems have been disrupted. That is why, he warned, the country needs EOA now and for all time, especially in this era of climate change which implies ever-changing ecosystems.

In conclusion, Dr Tewolde expressed his appreciation to ISD and its Ethiopian partner organizations for organizing the workshop, and also thanked the Swedish Society of Nature Conservation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for supporting the Ecological Organic Movement in Ethiopia and for their willingness to participate in the workshop.

The rest of the morning session was facilitated by Dr. Yitbarek Nigatu.

PRESENTATION 2: "OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE EOA INITIATIVE IN ETHIOPIA"

The Director of ISD, Ms Sue Edwards, presented a paper entitled "Overview and Expectations for the EOA Initiative in Ethiopia". She began by describing the impacts of ecological agriculture based on the experience of ISD since 1996.

Impacts of Ecological Agriculture: When farmers can improve the productivity of their soil using compost with or without chemical fertilizer and protect their natural resources, Sue said, the following positive aspects/outcomes result:

- ✓ The yields of their crops increase;
- ✓ The soil is more resistant to erosion;
- ✓ Rain water infiltrates the soil and renews the water table so that micro-irrigation becomes possible;
- ✓ Farmers can become food secure from one growing season to the next; and
- ✓ Everyone is better fed.

Smallholder Agriculture and Food Security: The presenter emphasized that:

- ✓ The reality in Ethiopia is that smallholder agriculture and pastoralism remain the source of livelihood for the majority of the population and source of food for all the population, both rural and urban.
- ✓ No farmer is too small to be ignored, as smallholder-based agriculture is here to stay.
- ✓ Farmers have a wealth of knowledge and agricultural biodiversity, plant and animal, that continues to provide the basis for developing improved varieties and breeds.

'Planting with Space': Sue informed the workshop that the term 'planting with space' is also internationally called "System of Crop Intensification" (SCI), as it is based on sound ecological principles that result in increased productivity without expanding the area of land under cultivation. The name 'planting with space' is used by farmers for this way of managing the growing of crops. It was adapted from the System of Rice (SRI) developed in the 1980s in Madagascar, which entails transplanting young seedlings in rows with good spacing between rows AND plants in the row OR sowing seed in rows again with good spacing between rows, as well as seeds in the row. In order to be productive, crop plants need space for good root development. Good root development results in

the plants producing more shoots with larger heads of grain, so yields increase. The most dramatic application of SCI is seen in the change in the yield of tef being doubled or more. Now the Ministry of Agriculture is promoting row planting of tef, as this is the most highly valued of all cereal crops in Ethiopia. Before SCI was applied to tef, ISD worked with the farmers and local agricultural experts near Axum to raise seedlings of finger millet and transplant these in rows when the main rains started. This has now become the standard practice for growing finger millet in many parts of Tigray and North Wollo in Amhara Region resulting in the yield being more than doubled.

International Assessment of Agricultural Science, Knowledge and Technology for Development (IAASTD): The presenter proceeded to describe IAASTD as *A multi-stakeholder assessment covering the period 2004-2008 and involving more than 400 authors and editors from international agencies (e.g. UNDP, GEF, UNEP, UNESCO, WHO, World Bank); civil society organizations (including farmers associations); the private sector and governments.* IAASTD developed a common vision for the future of agriculture based on ecological principles and gender equity. It was presented and approved by 58 countries at the Johannesburg Plenary in April 2008 and welcomed by 61 other countries. It is now the main reference document for the EOA Initiative in Africa.

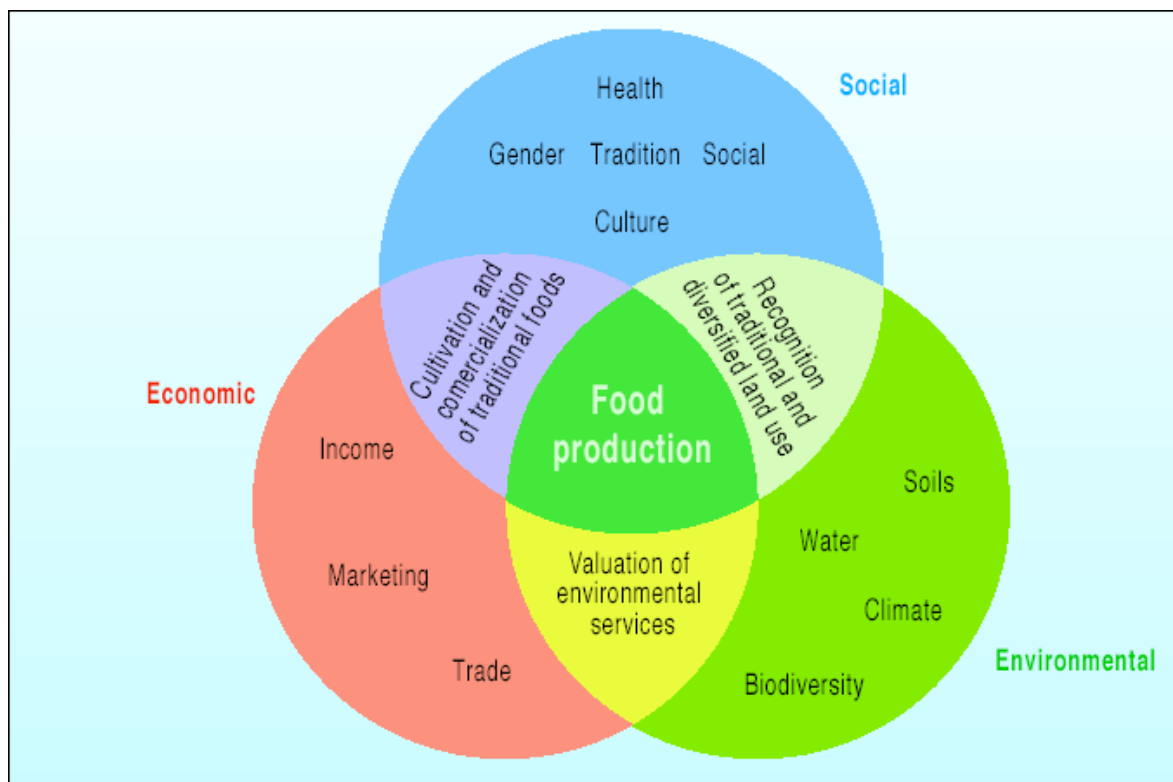
Sue presented a comprehensive definition of *Ecological Organic Agriculture* as: *“a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people, relying on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions”*, rather than the use of external inputs with adverse impacts on the local and global ecosystems. EOA combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment of people and the planet through promoting a fair relationships with a good quality of life for all. EOA also fits the new pathway that considers the ecology of agricultural systems in all their diversity.

The presenter went on to explain various aspects of *The New Agricultural Paradigm*, which recognizes and supports the multifunctional character of agriculture for a balance among its social, economic and environmental impacts (see Figure 1). It works with nature and not against it. It repairs, maintains and improves ecosystem services. It integrates traditional, time-tested knowledge with modern science and technology, e.g. use of trap crops (traditional) and pheromone traps (modern) for controlling insect pests. Very importantly, it maintains and improves the efficiency of natural cycles: natural cycles are integral to nutrient cycles and healthy productive soils and water bodies/wetlands, as well as food webs; for example, the balance between predators and prey/pests and their parasitoids; the basis of effective IPM/EPM (integrated pest management / ecological pest management) systems.

All the above leads to the eco-intensification of agriculture, or the application of agro-ecology.

This has been given formal recognition by the African Union in its Decision EX.CL/Dec.621 (XVIII) on Organic Farming adopted by the African Heads of States and Government in January 2011 Decision, see below.

The presenter stated that, in response to the AU Decision on Organic Farming, an inception workshop was organized for key stakeholders/actors in Ecological Organic Agriculture. The workshop, held in Thika, Kenya from May 2-3, 2011, was organized by PELUM-Kenya and the African Union Commission, with financial support received from the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC). The main aim of the workshop was to prepare an Action Plan to implement the AU Decision. The SSNC went on to financially support a pilot phase for the EOA in 2012.



*A critical challenge - Recognizing and Supporting Multifunctional Agriculture
(diagram courtesy of Hans Herren's presentation at the AU Conference on Ecological Agriculture,
November 2008)*

EX.CL/Dec.621 (XVIII)

DECISION ON ORGANIC FARMING

Doc. EX.CL/631 (XVIII)

The Executive Council,

1. TAKES NOTE of the Report of the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture held in Lilongwe, Malawi on 28 and 29 October 2010 on Organic Farming, and ENDORSES the Resolution contained therein;
2. EXPRESSES concern over the current practice of exploitation of the organic farmers in Africa;
3. REQUESTS the Commission and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) to:
 - i). Initiate and provide guidance for an African Union (AU)-led coalition of international partners on the establishment of an African organic farming platform based on available best practices; and
 - ii). Provide guidance in support of the development of sustainable organic farming systems and improve seed quality;
4. CALLS UPON development partners to provide the necessary technical and financial support for the implementation of this Decision;
5. REQUESTS the Commission to report regularly on the implementation of this Decision.

AFRICAN UNION

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Eighteenth Ordinary Session

24-28 January 2011

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

EX.CL/Dec. 600-643(XVIII)

Original: English/French

The EOA Initiative: The overall goal of the EOA Initiative is to mainstream EOA into national production systems by 2020 through six inter-related thematic areas or “pillars”. These are:

Pillar 1: Research, Training and Extension (RTE): This pillar will use a system-wide approach to understand and respond to issues facing smallholder farmers, both women and men, and the youth. Participatory, interdisciplinary and culturally appropriate research is encouraged to enhance access to training, extension and research that offer and provide support for the development of knowledge and skills needed by farming communities to adopt EOA. The pillar will integrate a dynamic and continuous process of knowledge and experience sharing, strategy building and contextual adjustment based on feedback from stakeholders.

Pillar 2: Information and Communication (IC): This pillar aims to use strategies for providing relevant and timely information and communication for EOA practitioners, as well as to increase awareness among stakeholders and the general public on the value and practices of EOA. It also aims to narrow and bridge the communications gap among research institutions, the EOA rural and urban farming communities as well as the extension service.

Pillar 3: Value Chain and Market Development (VC-MD): This pillar aims to promote interventions with a holistic approach throughout the chain from production to consumption in order to increase the value and stimulate market development for increased trade in traditional and high value/niche ecological organic products from African producers in domestic, regional and export markets.

Pillar 4: Networking and Partnership (N&P): This pillar will strengthen synergies among stakeholders and beneficiaries to support EOA through networking and forming partnerships. It will provide a platform for the engagement of governments, farmers, civil society, the private sector and the international community.

Pillar 5: Policy and Program Development (PPD): Stability in land management and tenure systems requires supportive policies and programs for local communities to improve soil fertility and natural resources management. This pillar aims to support stakeholders (agricultural extension agencies, policy making and implementation bodies, credit providing institutions, prospective agricultural markets, IC centres, etc), to share knowledge and experiences in order to identify measures and policies needed to support the growth and development of EOA nationally, regionally and internationally.

Pillar 6: Institutional Capacity Development: EOA in various forms has rapidly gained ground as a development option for an increasing number of smallholder farmers during the last decade. However, growth in this sector is limited by the absence of relevant project management and understanding among the various development actors, particularly CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) and CBOs (Community Based Organizations). This pillar aims to support training of professionals with the vision and competencies to facilitate community-based innovation and change processes geared towards establishing, developing and supporting EOA institutions in Africa.

These six pillars have been maintained as the framework for the support from SSNC. However, for the SDC support, the focus areas of Pillars 1 to 5 have been brought under the three pillars, RTE, IC and VC-MD while a Country Lead Organization (CLO) has been identified with responsibility of '*supporting and cementing for steering, coordination and management*', including policy and program development.

Another difference between the focus of support from SSNC and SDC is in the type of partners and beneficiaries to be included in the EOA Initiative. SSNC is a Swedish-based civil society organization that aims to work in developing the capacity and understanding of civil society globally to better protect and promote the value of the natural environment and its biodiversity for sustainable development, while SDC is an autonomous Swiss Government organization that supports the development of sound governmental policies and strategies for holistic and balanced development. Thus, these two sources of support for the EOA Initiative are complementary in their aims, and the implementers should work synergistically to be mutually supportive of each other.

The **Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP)**, developed in 2003, was given as an example where the EOA Initiative should be included. The AU has adopted CAADP as its framework for agricultural development in all member countries. It is based on the following six principles:

1. Employ agriculture-led growth to achieve MDG1 of halving poverty and hunger by 2015.
2. Pursuit of 6% average annual agricultural sector growth at national level.
3. Allocation of 10% of national budgets to the agricultural sector.
4. Exploitation of regional complementarities and cooperation to boost growth.
5. Policy efficiency, dialogue, review and accountability (evidence-based policy making).
6. Partnerships and alliances to include farmers, agribusiness and civil society.

The Commissioner of the Department for Rural Development and Agriculture (DREA) endorsed the incorporation of organic agriculture into CAADP in her keynote speech to the Meeting of the African Ministers of Agriculture and African Ministers of Trade on 29 November 2012. She emphasized that organic agriculture provided the best option for Africa's smallholder farmers to contribute to MDG1.

The presenter informed the workshop that there is an EOA African Steering Committee established and chaired by the Food Security Desk in the AUC.

Current Status of Implementation of the EOA Initiative: Wrapping up her presentation, Sue described the current status of implementation of EOA in specific countries in Africa. She said that in 2012, SSNC supported a Pilot Phase focusing on all Pillars except Pillar 5 (Policy) while two long-term projects were developed concurrently. These are:

- ✓ The 3–Year Project (2013-2015) supported by SSNC in four countries of Eastern Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda)
- ✓ The 5–Year Project (2014-2018) supported by SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) in eight countries (the above-mentioned four in Eastern Africa), and four in West Africa (Benin, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal).

PRESENTATION 3: “SOME EXAMPLES OF FARMERS’ PRACTICES IN ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY”

A presentation entitled “Some Examples of Farmer’s Practices in Ecological Agriculture and Food Security”, was delivered by Dr Hailu Araya, ISD's Advisor and Senior Community Facilitator in ecological agriculture.

Challenges facing Agriculture in Ethiopia: Dr Hailu gave a brief overview of the various challenges facing the agriculture sector in Ethiopia. He said Ethiopia is a mountainous country with many environmental challenges for farmers. Although agriculture is the main form of livelihood, about 30% of the population still live below the poverty line. Agricultural production is greatly affected by land degradation, deforestation and over-population because farmers are pushed into the unsustainable use of natural resources. Large parts of the country are also drought prone, while crop production is reduced by pests, diseases and nutrient depletion. Most interventions have been ineffective and unable to change the inadequate availability of human food and animal feed.

Ecological Agriculture: Dr Hailu explained the advantages of ecological agriculture, which ISD is promoting. He said it:

- ✓ Is a source of increased biomass and organic matter, creating a healthy soil system;
- ✓ Protects crops, fruits, vegetables, spices, and animal products from damage through un-wise use of chemicals;
- ✓ Results in the production of healthy food for humans and healthy feed for animals;
- ✓ Connects all strands of the eco-system (environment, human, animal); and
- ✓ Generally creates healthy soil, healthy products and a healthy society.

The presenter stated that *compost*, i.e. decomposed matter of all recyclable organic materials, is an integral aspect of organic agriculture. Pioneered by ISD with smallholder farming communities in Tigray, making and using compost by farmers is now part of the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension System. Traditionally, farmers collect cattle dung and add it to the soil with or without other materials to help maintain soil fertility. Tree nurseries have also always made and used compost in the soil mix of their nurseries beds.

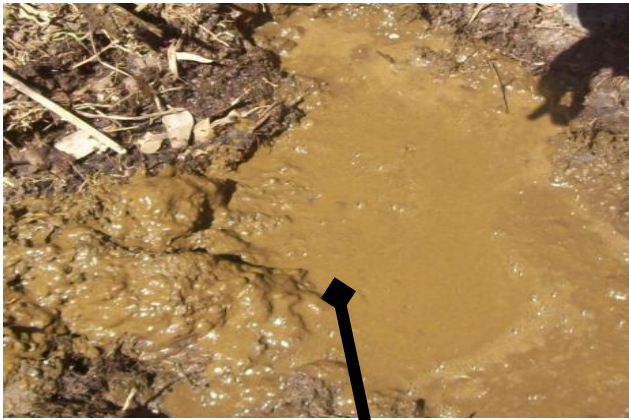
The “Push and Pull” Technology (PPT): Through a flow chart of photographs, Hailu described how smallholder farmers use the “Push and Pull” technology to protect maize and sorghum from being destroyed by two major pests, namely, stem borer moths and striga, a parasitic weed. Using PTT however, results in stem borer moths being pushed out of the crop by particular ‘smells’ given off from *Desmodium*, a legume grown between the crop rows. Border rows of Elephant or Brachiaria grass also attract the egg-laying moths, i.e. pull them to the forage grasses. *Desmodium* has also been found to cause Striga seed to germinate and then die before it can fix itself on to the crop roots.

Other benefits from PPT identified by farmers include maize plants that develop strong roots, stems, deep green leaves and large cobs. Growing *Desmodium* has also been found to protect tomato from *Orobanche*, another parasitic weed. The legume and grass also provide valuable animal fodder.

Hailu also used a series of photographs illustrating the application of ecological principles to improved crop, vegetable, coffee and spice production.

Recommendations for Expanded and Improved Ecological Agricultural Activities: In concluding his presentation, Dr Hailu put forward the following recommendations for improved and expanded ecological agricultural activities:

- ✓ Physically working with farmers to ensure that organic agriculture activities yield better results and that the required technology is transferred and taken up properly;
- ✓ Conducting pilot demonstrations on organic agriculture in selected locations (e.g. schools);



Bioslurry



Dry and green plant materials



Two bioslurry compost making pits protected under shade



Mature compost



Farmer Sissay and amazing maize cob

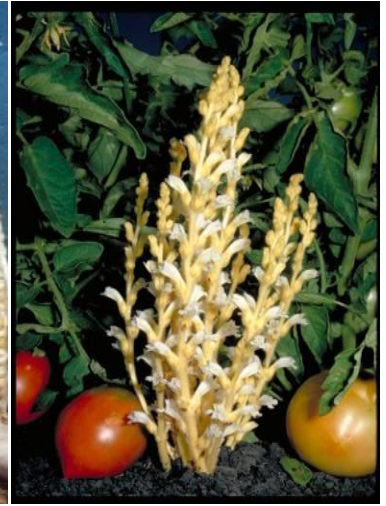
Flow chart to show making and protecting compost, and impact of bioslurry compost on maize



Striga infestation in sorghum



Stem borer larvae in maize cobs



Orobanche in tomato



PPT maize field in Aksum University



Farmer Zewdie with her PPT sorghum/maize mixed field



Silver leaf (left) and Green leaf (right) Desmodium



Experience sharing field visit to sorghum PPT field

PPT: the challenges at the top and the solutions being used by farmers

- ✓ Establishing resource centres on ecological agriculture and promoting sensitization programs on the same, in which community members can participate and policy makers are able to understand the differences between ecological and other types of agriculture.

Testimonials from two farmers: Dr Hailu then introduced two farmers, Ms Tesfanesh Bekele from Wondo Genet in SNNP Region, and Mr Sisay Bogale from Ambassel Wereda, South Wollo Zone in Amhara Region. Each gave a brief and articulate descriptions of their experiences and successes in implementing organic agricultural activities.

Ms Tesfanesh informed the workshop that she had been planting coffee, chat, tef, wheat and maize on two hectares of land using compost made from the bioslurry produced by her biogas digester. She said that the yields were very good and had been obtained in a relatively short period. The use of biogas had greatly reduced her workload in the home setting. She also informed the participants that she had sold Birr 5000 worth of bioslurry compost to 250 farmers and was currently instructing them in its use. Furthermore, Tesfanesh stated that she is nurturing 150 bee hives in order to extract and sell copious amounts of honey. In conclusion, she said that she had received a prize for her work on organic agriculture and had displayed her products at an exhibition in her home region. She genuinely feels that her OA activities have contributed to a change in attitude regarding implementation of OA in her kebele and wereda.

Mr Sisay emphasized that the “push-pull” technology he was employing in his crop growing activities had resulted in good yields. He had planted his crops in rows, applying the legume *Desmodium* between the rows of crop. Not liking the particular ‘smells’ given off by the *Desmodium*, the moths and butterflies were pushed out and did not touch the crops. From experience, Sisay said, it was far better to use compost than chemicals

PRESENTATION 4: “THE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING ECOLOGICAL AND ORGANIC AGRICULTURE (EOA) IN ETHIOPIA”

A presentation entitled “International and National Legal Instruments on EOA and Farmers Varieties”, was made by Mr Mellese Damtie, Assistant Professor at the Civil Service University. The topic was presented in four parts under the sub-titles (a) Introduction; (b) Why Laws and Policies on EOA? (c) Legal and Policy Instruments for the Adoption of EOA. and (d) Conclusion.

Introduction: In his introduction, Mr Mellese emphasized that EOA is generally an agricultural system that works with nature, instead of replacing it. It enhances and complements natural processes and considers soil as a living entity, not a lifeless thing. He said that current changes in agricultural systems are faster than at any time in the history of agriculture, and that advancements in science and technology, population growth, climate change and changes in lifestyle are some factors that contribute to transformation of agricultural systems. There are also a number of concerns relating to this change, such as ecosystem disturbance, health issues and loss of genetic diversity. Mr Mellese stressed that smallholder farming systems can provide solutions to some of the concerns, and that the farming systems can be effective if appropriate investment is made in order for them to become more ecological, organic and productive.

Why Laws and Policies on EOA? Mr Mellese pointed out that laws and policies are meant to solve real and potential societal problems. The following, he said, are major reasons that laws and policies are required regarding EOA:

Ecological Reasons—It is hoped that EOA will pursue holistic approaches (as opposed to 'reductionist' approaches) in food production (e.g. taking into consideration that the whole of the ecosystem is a contributing factor regarding agricultural activities, instead of only farms). It also promotes climate friendly agriculture based on low external inputs, local transportation, carbon sequestration, etc.).

Consumers' Rights—Protection of consumers from health risks arising from unsafe and poor quality or counterfeit food. Thus EOA has health benefits, provides safe nutritious food and protects both agricultural and wild biodiversity through:

- ✓ Diversified food production, including intercropping.
- ✓ Diversified varieties within a species.
- ✓ Absence of, or reduced genetic contamination.

Farmers' Rights—These include:

- ✓ *The right of choice*: Farmers are free to choose the type of farming system they wish to adopt, without any external imposition but based on informed decisions.
- ✓ *Freedom of farmers to save and use their own seeds*. This includes avoidance of compulsory 'seed replacement' policies which undermine the freedom of farmers to save, use and improve their own varieties.
- ✓ Avoidance of 'intellectual property' laws, patent law and breeders rights laws which prohibit saving of seeds by farmers.

Legal and Policy Instruments for Adoption of EOA: Mr Mellese informed the gathering that there are a number of legal, policy and strategic instruments at both international and national levels which favour the adoption of EOA. Moreover, he said, there are numerous resolutions by the UN and its specialized agencies such as FAO, that suggest that EOA could tackle hunger and malnutrition for the benefit of the ever-growing world population.

International Instruments: Mr. Mellese stated that most international instruments deal indirectly with EOA, while some refer to it directly. He said that legal instruments are there to be interpreted so that they conform to the objectives they promote. The following are among the major instruments:

The CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity) emphasizes the conservation combined with sustainable use of biodiversity and all its components. Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use should be pursued by adopting specific strategies, plans and programs, and by incorporating relevant concerns into any plans, programs and policies (Article 6). Sustainable use of biodiversity must also be a consideration in national decision-making (Article 10 a.)

Plans, programs and decisions of the CBD can easily be related to EOA. National legislators may draw upon the CBE and the CCD (Convention to Combat Desertification) to justify provisions in national legislation on institutional cooperation, public participation in decision-making, and decentralization.

Agenda 21: Chapter 14 Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, Provision 14.27 states that "Governments at the appropriate level, with the support of the relevant international and regional organizations, should develop and disseminate to farming households, integrated farm management technologies such as crop rotation, organic manuring and other techniques involving reduced use of agricultural chemicals..."

EOA can build upon key concepts of the CBD and assist other efforts in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity across other sectors.

Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) The major objectives of the Convention are to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, through effective action at all levels.

The objectives of CCD can be realized through adoption of EOA. The latter can also significantly contribute to implementation of CCD by developing and disseminating to farming households, integrated farm management technologies such as crop rotation, organic manuring and other techniques involving reduced use of agricultural chemicals... while enhancing techniques for waste and by-product utilization and prevention of pre and post harvest losses, taking particular note of the role of women.

It should also consolidate, document and disseminate information on biological control agents and organic pesticides, as well as on traditional and other relevant knowledge and skills regarding alternative non-chemical ways of controlling pests (Provision 14.77 b.)

National Instruments: Mr Mellese stated that, in addition to the international instruments, there are also a number of national legal, policy and strategic instruments which support EOA in Ethiopia. Like the international instruments, some of these are explicit and some others are more implicit on EOA. Major national instruments on EOA are the following.

The Constitution of the FDRE (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia)

Article 41 on “Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” states that Ethiopian farmers and pastoralists have the right to receive fair prices for their products.

Article 43 on “The Right to Development” states that: *All international agreements and relations concluded, established or conducted by the State shall protect and ensure Ethiopia’s right to sustainable development* (Sub-article 1). The People of Ethiopia as a whole and each Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia in particular have the right to improved living standards and to sustainable development (Sub-article 3).

EOA is one of the key areas to achieve sustainable development, as foreseen by the Constitution, that would lead to improvement in the conditions of life [of all Ethiopians] and enable them to obtain an equitable share of the national wealth commensurate with their contribution. This objective shall guide the State in the formulation of economic, social and development policies (Sub-article 8).

Although this constitutional provision does not directly refer to EOA, it can be interpreted to incorporate EOA, as the latter can ensure better prices in a sustainable manner for farmers and pastoralists.

Proclamation No. 488/2006 (Organic Agriculture System Proclamation) Although the word “Ecological” is missing from the title of this law, it can be applied to EOA. The preambular objectives of this Proclamation include the following:

- ✓ To ensure fair prices for farmers. As a result of increased consumers’ demand for organically produced agricultural products, new markets are being created and this is an opportunity for a better price for the rural population. (This idea is also supported by the FDRE Constitution,

Article 41.8 which states “ Ethiopian farmers and pastoralists have the right to receive a fair price for their products...”, referred to above).

- ✓ To introduce proper labeling of organic agricultural products which benefit both producers and consumers.
- ✓ To adopt this internationally accepted production, processing and distribution system in our country. All operators using labels referring to organic production should be subjected to regular follow up carried out by accredited inspection and certification bodies, to ensure that they meet the prescribed minimum requirements.

Proclamations No. 661/2009 (Food, Medicine and Health Care Administration and Control Proclamation) and No. 685/2010 (Trade Practice and Consumers’ Protection Proclamation).

These Proclamations:

- ✓ Protect consumers from health risks arising from unsafe and poor quality food.
- ✓ Protect against counterfeit activities.
- ✓ Provide sufficient information to consumers, e.g. through labeling.
- ✓ Regulate unfair competition.
- ✓ Deal with details of technical provisions in relation to inspection, certification, accreditation and supervision.

If no subordinate rules are provided for the implementation of the Proclamations, the MoA may resort to internationally accepted standards (Proclamation 685/2010, Article 13.2). However, these Proclamations do not have a list of prohibited activities and penalty clauses. Furthermore, they do not refer to OA directly, but define “organic agricultural product” as a product which is produced, processed or handled and distributed without the use of synthetic chemicals and genetically modified organism (Proclamation 661/2009, Article 2.4)

The Rural Development Policy and Strategies (with particular reference to ADLI) This document does not refer directly to OA. However it repeatedly mentions the phrase “ensuring sustainable agriculture”.

Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) Although the GTP supports the use of chemical fertilizers, it also emphasizes the introduction of organic fertilizers. Provision 5.1.4 (a) of GTP states that “Parallel to an increased use of chemical fertilizers, government will introduce activities to create awareness and develop skills to increase the amount and coverage of organic fertilizer use ... action will be taken to increase distribution and use of organic fertilizers such as bio-fertilizers that can easily be used by farmers”. Provision 8.9.1 also provides for the use of organic fertilizers as a method of mitigation of greenhouse gases.

Environmental Policy of Ethiopia Article 3.1 of the Policy is devoted to soil husbandry and sustainable agriculture Its objectives, as stated in Article 3.1(c), are to:

- ✓ Promote the use of appropriate organic matter and nutrient management for improving soil structure, nutrient status and microbiology, in improving soil conservation and land husbandry.
- ✓ To safeguard the integrity of the soil and to protect its physical and biological properties, through management practices for the production of crops and livestock which pay

particular attention to the proper balance in amounts of chemical and organic fertilizers, including green manures, farm yard manures and compost.

Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economy Ethiopia's ambition is to build a green economy, meaning that in its development it will work to reduce, minimize or offset the production of green house gases through technologies and management systems that capture / sequester carbon to balance the inevitable production of carbon dioxide in some industrial processes. The country has devised various mechanisms to achieve this, including adoption of an agricultural system that reduces emissions. For agriculture, the objectives are to:

- ✓ Introduce lower-emission agricultural techniques ranging from the use of carbon and nitrogen-efficient crop cultivars, to the promotion of organic fertilizers. These measures would reduce emissions from already-cultivated areas.
- ✓ Increase usage of slow-release fertilizers and manure, thereby replenishing soil nutrients in order to ensure sustainable soil fertility.

Conclusion: Concluding his presentation, Mr Mellese said that existing practices in Ethiopia suggest that it is easier to develop EOA if other conditions are fulfilled. He confirmed that the legal and policy frameworks for implementing EOA in Ethiopia are in place, but that it was not possible to argue that they are comprehensive. He also said that the institutional setup regarding accreditation, certification and supervision, as well as functional linkage between all federal and regional stakeholders, are essential if an effective EOA system in the country is to be realized.

PRESENTATION 5: "ORGANIC AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT: OVERVIEW IN EAST AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND THE ETHIOPIAN ORGANIC SECTOR DEVELOPMENT"

A presentation entitled "Organic Agriculture Development: Overview in East African Countries and Ethiopian Organic Sector Development", was made by Ms Azeb Worku, ISD's Expert on Organic Agriculture. She began with IFOAM's definition of Organic Agriculture as "*a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic Agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved*".

IFOAM has defined the Principles of Organic Agriculture as follows:

Principle of Health: Organic Agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plants, animals, humans and the planet as one and indivisible.

Principle of Ecology: Organic Agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, working with them, and emulating and sustaining them.

Principle of Fairness: Organic Agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.

Principle of Care: Organic Agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner in order to protect the health and well being of current and future generations and the environment.

Status of global organic agriculture: Based on a FIBL-IFOAM Survey published in 2013, Azeb described the global distribution of organic agricultural land by region in 2011 as follows: Oceania

(33%), Europe (29%), Latin America (18%), Asia (10%), Northern America (75%), and Africa (3%). Among different countries, Australia had the largest area of certified organic agricultural land (12 million hectares in 2009), followed by Argentina (3.8 million hectares), and the US (1.9 million hectares in 2008). On the other hand, Finland had the largest non-agricultural organic areas (7 million hectares), with Zambia a close second (5.9 million hectares), and India, third (4.5 million hectares). With regard to organic market size, the US had the largest share with 29 billion dollars, while Germany's share amounted to 6.6 billion dollars, and France's, to 5.2 billion dollars.

In Africa, the Survey indicated that those countries with the largest organic agricultural areas in 2011 were, Uganda, followed by Tunisia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Egypt, Sudan, South Africa, Congo DRC, Madagascar, and Cote d'Ivoire. East African countries with the largest, certified organic agricultural areas, as well as the largest number of certified organic farmers were Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi. Countries with the largest domestic markets for organic food in 2011 were the US, followed by Germany, France, Canada, UK, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Japan and Spain.

Current Status of Organic Development Within the East African Community: Azeb proceeded to describe the current status of organic development in East Africa. She noted improvements in such areas as certification services in East African countries, market access to the EU, as well as an enhanced conformity assessment system regarding smallholder farmers. She pointed out that the East African Organic Standard had been devised for the benefit of implementers, that local market and intra East African regional market opportunities had improved, and that the East Africa organic mark '*kilimohai*' was now well known and managed.

Organic Policy Development in Africa: The presenter gave an overview of organic development within the East African Community. She explained that countries in Africa and the East African Community were at different stages of organic policy formulation and development. Tunisia was among the first countries to formulate an organic agriculture policy. Kenya had initiated a policy analysis and come up with various options, after which the country formulated a draft policy and conducted dialogue on the issue with various stakeholders. In 2006, Tanzania incorporated organic policy statements into its Livestock Development Policy. This led to the launching of its Organic Agriculture Development Program in 2009, while statements on organic policy were incorporated into the National Agriculture Policy of 2013. Uganda approved an Organic Agriculture Policy and Strategy in 2012, while Rwanda and Burundi are currently at an early stage of policy formulation.

Impact of Organic Agriculture in East African Countries: Azeb noted that the impact of organic agriculture in 15 countries in eastern Africa, based on 150 qualitative interviews conducted by OSEA with organic farmers, was identified as follows:

- ✓ Increased yields through use of affordable inputs.
- ✓ Improved livelihoods and food security.
- ✓ Reduction in financial risk by replacing expensive chemical inputs with locally available renewable resources.
- ✓ Integration of traditional farming practices.
- ✓ Greater access by farmers to new market opportunities, both locally and externally.
- ✓ Greater resilience of farming systems in periods of drought or heavy rain.
- ✓ Improved human health and maximization of environmental services.

Organic Sector Development in Ethiopia: Describing the sequence in the development of the organic sector in Ethiopia, Azeb explained that commercial organic agricultural activities first began in 1996 with the production of sesame in the Humera area of western Ethiopia. After 2000, certified organic production of coffee and honey also developed. All three high value products were being produced for the organic export market.

The 2006 Proclamation, described by Mellese, provided for the implementation of an Ethiopian Organic Agriculture System. This led to an “Organic Movement” launching workshop in 2007. In 2008, the Ethiopian Association of Organic Agriculture (EAOA) was established and registered. Non government organizations have contributed greatly to an improvement in the livelihoods of smallholder farmers through promoting ecological farming, so they were the main actors in the start up of the EAOA. The other main producers of organic products in Ethiopia are private businesses, and cooperatives, the latter particularly in relation to organic Arabica coffee. Ethiopia is currently producing the following organic products:

- ✓ Honey from SNNP (Bonga and Sheka), Tigray, Oromia and Amhara Regions;
- ✓ Coffee and cotton from Oromia and SNNP;
- ✓ Sesame from Tigray (Humera) and Oromia (Wollega) Regions;
- ✓ Essential oils and herbs from SNNP;
- ✓ Gums and resins from Somali, Afar and Amhara Regions;

There are four international certifying agencies operating in Ethiopia, and a total of 110,861 farmers from 40 farmers’ unions have been certified as organic farmers. The core organic products, coffee, sesame and honey, have entered the world market. The certified land area for coffee, sesame and honey is 84%, 6%, and 4% respectively. Three coffee farmers’ unions have taken the lead in the production and export of organic coffee. These are: Oromia Coffee Farmers’ Union, Yirga Cheffe Coffee Farmers’ Union, and Sidama Coffee Farmers’ Union.

Opportunities for growing the organic agricultural sector in Ethiopia: In concluding her presentation, Azeb emphasized the opportunities and the current positive environment for implementing and enhancing organic agriculture activities in Ethiopia. She said that: agro-climatic conditions in many parts of Ethiopia favour organic production; demand for organic products in developed markets is increasing, with such products commanding premium prices in the world market; and that a number of companies are looking to expand their output through the inclusion of out-grower schemes to support smallholder farmers move into organic production. She also stated that low external input production by farmers can be developed into certifiable organic production through training, and that the low use of agrichemicals can lead to largely simplified inspection procedures and therefore, lower costs.

Finally, Azeb informed the workshop that donors and the Ethiopian government are becoming more supportive of ecological organic agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture has established an office for organic agriculture, and the EAOA is in the process of being re-established and re-registered to coordinate and promote organic agriculture.

QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION/DISCUSSION SESSION

Several questions on the above presentations were raised by participants, which led to a discussion session.

Question put to Farmer Tesfanesh Bekele: What difference did you observe in your crop yield prior to and after using bioslurry technology?

Answer: I witnessed a very great difference. In one instance, I poured a jerri-can of bioslurry over some coffee bushes which had refused to grow and produce fruits. The result was astounding. The plants began growing to such an extent that the branches began to droop, unable to carry the weight of the coffee berries. Noticing this, other farmers began purchasing bioslurry from me in jerri cans and using on their own crops which have since borne very good fruit in a short period of time.

Question put jointly to Farmers Tesfanesh Bekele and Sisay Bogale, and Hailu Araya: The innovator farmers from Wendo Genet and Wollo said that their production and income had increased. Yet many farmers who had seen the results and improvement in income were not attracted to take up these technologies as expected. Why not?

Answer: Hailu replied that ultimately, the choice to emulate the successes of Farmers Sisay and Tesfanesh lay with the farmers themselves. Obviously they could not be compelled to do so. Farmers could observe firsthand the results obtained by Sisay and Tesfanesh through visits to their innovation/demonstration sites and by attending exhibitions where their products were displayed. Whether or not they wish to follow the example of the two farmers however, is entirely up to them.

Question put to Farmer Sisay Bogale: How do you measure the effect of the “push-pull” strategy on pest damage and grain yield of sorghum?

Answer: I compared and contrasted the effect of the “push-pull” strategy on my field with that of a nearby field that did not employ the strategy. There was a marked difference. While pest damage to sorghum planted on my own field was virtually non-existent, we witnessed a great deal of damage to the sorghum planted on the adjoining farm/field which did not utilize the “push-pull” strategy. Furthermore, my crop yield was far larger than that obtained in the adjoining field.

Question put to Mellese Damtie: You stressed the need for farmers’ rights and mentioned that there is currently no seed replacement policy. Recently however, COMESA passed a decision that goes against farmers’ rights. What is your opinion on this?

Answer: Present laws [in Ethiopia] allow farmers to use F1 and F2 seeds. COMESA however, is silent about farmers’ rights. Application of the COMESA regulation would be difficult if it inhibits farmers’ rights and prevents them from utilizing their own saved seeds. The regulation would be difficult to apply in Ethiopia, as it goes against present laws on farmers’ rights. However, there is some hope, as smallholder farmers’ movements in Europe, worried about the trend towards monopoly of seed distribution by giant food corporations, are currently refusing to fill in questionnaires enquiring where and how they obtained the seeds they used in 2013.

Question put to Mellese Damtie: Regarding the issue of biodiversity, research is currently being undertaken on very limited range of varieties of crop in order to boost crop production. This might have a negative effect. For instance, a disease might wipe out this single variety (and the entire crop production). What then? Is it not better to conduct research on different varieties simultaneously, so as to prevent such a drastic scenario?

Answer: Research on high yielding varieties of crops could be conducted. However, we should defer to farmers’ choices. The law cannot regulate on this issue. Only farmers can choose whether they want to grow only one variety of crop or more than one.

Question put to Mellese Damtie: The PLC, Ecological Products Ethiopia (ECOPIA) has, since 2006, been working on organic agriculture with smallholder farmers. However, there is some confusion over the mandates of various organizations regarding EOA. Which government ministry is responsible for conducting research to add value to farmers' products, Agriculture? Health? Industry?

Answer: There is indeed confusion over the mandates of various stakeholders, just as there is in developed countries. There is no easy answer to this question and it may be necessary to conduct a national workshop to address the issue.

Question put to Azeb Worku: Organic farming began quite a while ago on lowland areas, but has not progressed very far. What is the reason for this? What should be done to expand this type of farming?

Answer: This is a dilemma. A sustainable approach to agriculture is required, including distinguishing ways of tracing organic produce from production to export, as well as acquiring accreditation for exported products. There is a need to know what best practices can reliably promote OA. It is recommended to cluster OA production areas in order to ensure follow up on implemented activities, and there should be no mixing up of organic and inorganic agriculture. It also needs to be understood that EOA combines both scientific and natural methods of farming. Thus an integrated farming system, using both scientific and natural methods (e.g. use of compost) will be required to push the agricultural agenda in general and OA in particular.

AFTERNOON SESSION

The afternoon session was facilitated by Ms Sue Edwards.

PRESENTATION 6: ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA: SDC'S SUPPORT CONTRIBUTION AND THE ROLE OF BIOVISION AFRICA TRUST (BVAT)

A paper entitled "Ecological Organic Agriculture in Africa: SDC's Support Contribution and the Role of Biovision Africa Trust (BVAT)", was presented by Ms Vanencia Wambua, on behalf of Dr David Amudavi, Director, Biovision Africa Trust.

Ms Wambua presented an Action Plan for the Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative, summarizing its Overall Goal, Vision and Mission as follows:

Overall Goal – To mainstream EOA into national agricultural production systems, policies and practices by 2025, in order to improve agricultural productivity, food security, access to markets and sustainable development in Africa;

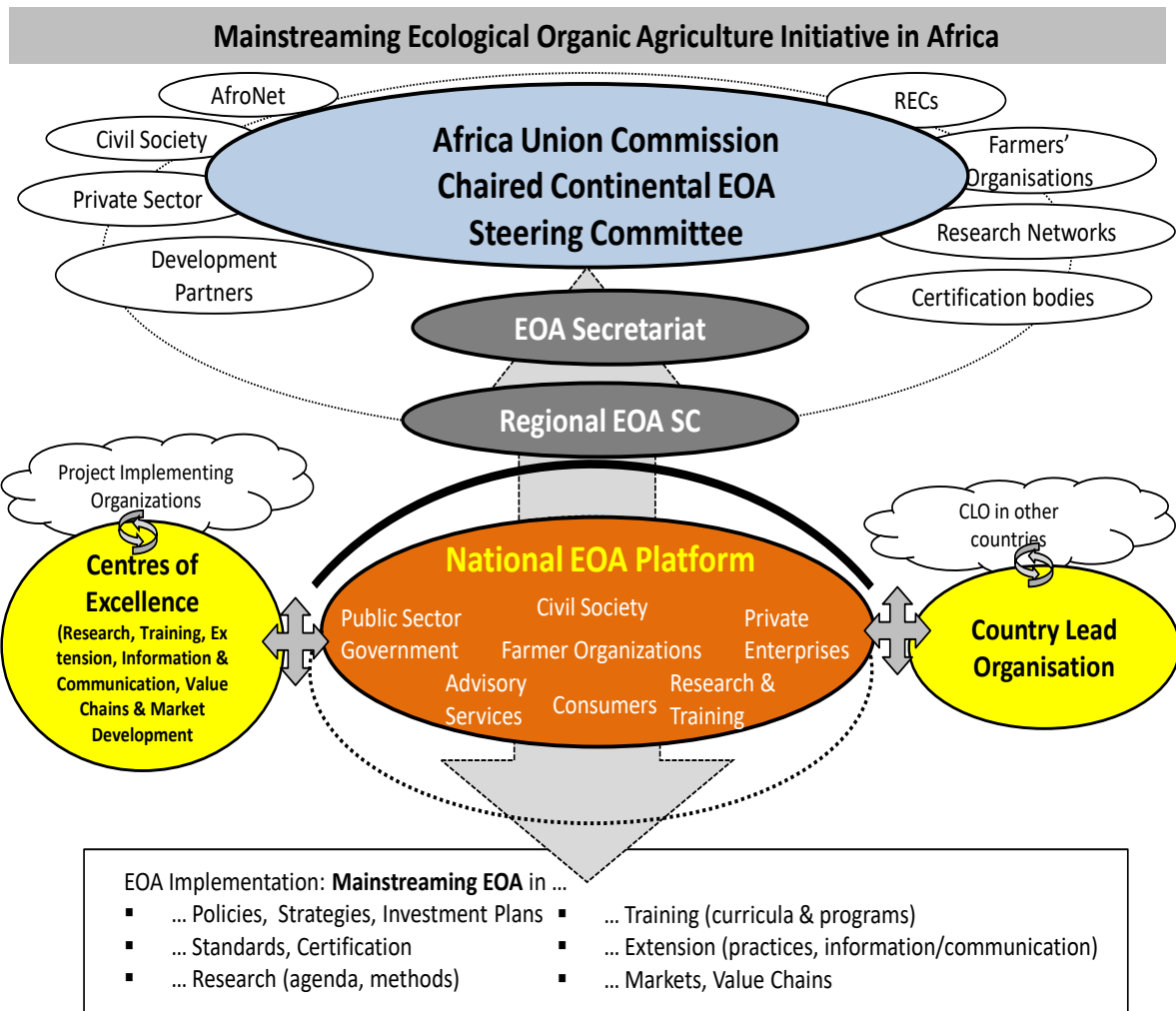
Vision – [To develop and support] Vibrant Ecological Organic Systems for Enhanced Food Security and Sustainable Development in Africa; and,

Mission – To promote ecologically sound strategies and practices among diverse stakeholders in production, processing and marketing, through strategic actions and policy making, in order to alleviate poverty, guarantee adequate health, food security, improve livelihoods and safeguard the environment.

Pilot and Rolling Out of EOA in Africa: The EOA pilot phase in 2012, focused mainly on preliminary baseline surveys and supported by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC/SIDA), was carried out in 6 countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia). In order to widen

the EOA to more countries in West Africa, baseline studies were conducted in Benin, Mali and Senegal with SDC support. The SSNC is currently supporting a three-year roll-out, 2013-2015, of EOA in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. 2014 is the start of a five-year roll-out, 2014-2015, supported by SDC to be implemented in eight Sub-Saharan countries: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia in Eastern Africa, and Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Benin in West Africa.

The presenter proceeded to describe the role of BvAT and the mandates, objectives and membership of National Platforms. These relationships were also explained through an diagram, see below.



The relationships among the various components of the EOA Initiative in Africa

Role of Biovision Africa Trust: BvAT is responsible for the management and coordination of the EOA Initiative supported by SDC. As the lead agency of the Initiative, BvAT acts on behalf of and is accountable to the Continental EOA Steering Committee, chaired by the food security desk of the AU, and to AfrONet (African Organic Network). BvAT will work closely with the organizations and structures put in place to support implementation of the EOA projects on the continent – the Continental EOA Steering Committee, Regional EOA Steering Committees, National EOA Platforms, and the Country Lead Organizations (CLOs). BvAT will facilitate the establishment of National Platforms and the selection of Country Lead Organizations and Pillar/Project implementing partners (PIPs), and will be responsible for management, accountability and general oversight of all partner agencies. It will receive reports from CLOs for submission to SDC and other partners.

Mandate of the National EOA Platforms: The mandate of the National EOA Platforms will include:

- ✓ Streamlining EOA's operations at country level
- ✓ Rallying of partners/actors in EOA at both country and continental level
- ✓ Facilitating sharing of achievements, lessons learnt and experiences
- ✓ Supporting/lobbying for policy change, investment plans, etc.
- ✓ Shaping the national research and development agenda on EOA
- ✓ Facilitating selection of and providing support to CLOs and PIPs.

On the basis of the above mandate, three main objectives will be pursued by the national forum:

1. Catalyze integration of ecological organic agriculture (EOA) in government policies, strategies, plans and programs.
2. Link and coordinate EOA activities at country level, including sharing of information and experiences among stakeholders.
3. Create awareness and increase the critical mass and voice of proponents of EOA.

The membership of the country National Platforms is recommended to include:

- ✓ Agriculture and other relevant sector ministries
- ✓ Research and higher educational institutions
- ✓ The Private Sector
- ✓ Civil Society Organizations
- ✓ Policy research and development institutions
- ✓ Certification and regulatory agencies
- ✓ Development partners (those who wish may join)

National EOA Steering Committee (NESC): Stakeholders should democratically elect/nominate a National EOA Steering Committee to provide leadership and overall supervision of EOA at country level. Representation in the NESC will be based on institutions rather than individuals. The NESC will be responsible for:

- ✓ Providing leadership, guidance and overall supervision of EOA at country level
- ✓ Exploring ways of integrating EOA within national programs, strategies and investment plans
- ✓ Developing national structures for implementing the Initiative
- ✓ Developing a country's national platform's long term goals and strategies
- ✓ Reviewing national progress reports on a regular basis
- ✓ Initiating high-level coordination of EOA activities
- ✓ Establishing and implementing partnerships and resource mobilization for EOA at national level
- ✓ Creating linkages between country level EOA activities and regional and continental activities

The proposed NESC would have the following officers, Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary plus representations from:

- ✓ Research and training
- ✓ The Private Sector
- ✓ Government (e.g. MOA)
- ✓ Civil Society Organizations
- ✓ Farmers Organizations
- ✓ Development partners who wish to join

Country Lead Organizations (CLOs): The CLOs, with the endorsement and support for the National Platforms, will be responsible for the following tasks:

- ✓ Coordinate project activity implementation at country level
- ✓ Disburse funds to project implementing partners as per the proposal and signed work agreements and contracts
- ✓ Supervise and monitor implementation of project activities
- ✓ Support building of networks and experience sharing across pillars
- ✓ Catalyze and support the process of forming National Platforms
- ✓ Provide secretariat facilities for the NESC
- ✓ Report to TNPs, AfrONet and development partners
- ✓ Report to BvAT (operational/narrative and financial reports)
- ✓ Provide all financial support documents as explained in the contracts

Selection of Country Lead Organizations (CLOs): Stakeholders are required to carefully choose a reputable organization to be the CLO. This is a crucial position that should not be given to just any organization without scrutiny. Many national, regional and continental projects and programs fail because of not having competent and transparent organizations as their lead organizations. In selecting a CLO, a potential organization for this responsibility must meet the following requirements:

- ✓ It should have national appeal
- ✓ It should be a proponent of EOA
- ✓ It should have established structures/systems of management
- ✓ It should have the ability to mobilize and rally other actors from different sectors and institutions
- ✓ It should have the ability to network, strengthen and expand the EOA Initiative
- ✓ It should have the ability to monitor and hold project implementing partners accountable
- ✓ It should be mandated by the National Actors to enhance broad-base buy-in

Project/Pillar Implementing Partners (PIPs): Country activities will be undertaken by reputable partners selected and approved by the stakeholders through the national platforms. The PIPs, with the endorsement and support of the National Platforms will be responsible for the following tasks:

- ✓ Implementing, in collaboration with other partners, assigned project activities in the country
- ✓ Supporting the building of networks and experience sharing with other stakeholders
- ✓ Reporting progress and results of project implementation to National Platforms and development partners.

The following considerations are recommended in selecting PIPs:

- ✓ Identify potential partners and assess their capacity to contribute effectively to project objectives and impact pathway as described by the needs of the project
- ✓ The partners should have at least three years of proven experience working on successful projects benefiting farmers and rural communities
- ✓ Check partners' track record of capacity to deliver on obligations and expectations, and whether they have a presence in the geographic areas where the project will be implemented
- ✓ Check the partners' administrative capacity in terms of procurement and financial management and their track record in organizational issues and management of project funds
- ✓ Assess potential partners' capacity to leverage collaboration in setting of the project (respect for and standing of the partner, reputation for getting things done, partner's own networks of influence, etc.), and whether they have experience working through community-based organizations to deliver services and/or carry out other project activities at the village level
- ✓ Cross check with the project donors regarding their previous experiences with the partners
- ✓ Appraise the PIP's shared values and commitment to development and achievement of desired outputs

Objectives of the National Platforms as Supported by CLOs and PIPs: The final part of the presentation from BvAT outlined the objectives as follows:

Objective 1: To integrate EOA in government policies, strategies, plans and programs, specifically:

- ✓ To undertake policy gap analysis on current country policies and evaluate the extent to which they support EOA activities
- ✓ To align the EOA Initiative with national policies, based on the findings of the policy gap analysis
- ✓ To work closely with Country Agriculture Directors or equivalents, to integrate EOA in country policies, strategies and investment plans.

Objective 2: To link and coordinate EOA activities at country level, including sharing of information and experiences among stakeholders, specifically:

- ✓ To link EOA with other relevant activities
- ✓ To undertake programmatic information sharing

- ✓ To develop a national platform website
- ✓ To establish national clusters around thematic areas such as research, training, production, and trade, among others
- ✓ To organize special forums for the clusters to meet, share information and success stories, as well as plan for pertinent issues affecting the cluster
- ✓ To undertake program monitoring, evaluation and reporting
- ✓ To organize regular program review meetings for the National Platform Steering Committee and implementing partners
- ✓ To organize stakeholders' forums to review and decide on the way forward regarding the EOA Initiative
- ✓ To follow up on implementation of 'Way Forward' ideas from stakeholders' meetings, in consultation with project coordinators

Objective 3: *To create awareness and increase the critical mass and voice of proponents of EOA, specifically:*

- ✓ To recruit stakeholders to join the country national platform
- ✓ To establish county/district/zonal contact points. These are organizations which will be responsible for coordinating activities at the unit level. They will be useful links to disseminate EOA information at country level down to the grassroots and provide feedback from these levels to the national level
- ✓ To appoint a regional platform representative who will be the link between national and regional steering committees and regularly report to national and regional level entities.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The five-year plan will be implemented through an annual cycle of planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting by the National Platforms/CLOs. In developing the M&E, particular attention will be given to participatory monitoring and training of field practitioners on how to use results to improve service delivery and encourage learning by the beneficiaries.

A database will be developed and maintained of (a) ecological-based technologies and practices (b) 'best fit' methodologies and approaches (processes) from which African implementing countries can take lessons, and (c) EOA actors interested in sharing their experiences.

Country annual plans and budgets will be prepared by CLOs and PIPs and submitted to the EOA Project Manager in BvAT for approval by the Continental EOA Steering Committee, chaired by the African Union Commission.

GENERAL DISCUSSION ON HOW TO PROCEED ON SETTING UP STRUCTURES TO IMPLEMENT EOA IN ETHIOPIA

Ms. Sue Edwards kicked off the discussion by asking how the issue of setting up a National Platform or Steering Committee in Ethiopia should be tackled, in view of various policy and administrative limitations contained in the Ethiopian Charities and Societies Law. One could not simply dictate to the government over the setting up of a National Steering Committee. She reminded the workshop that all agriculture-related activities, including advisory services on cooperatives, were under the

Ministry of Agriculture, and that there were no “private” extension services, only those of the government.

In response, Dr Yitbarek reminded the participants that the EOA Steering Committee chaired by the AU had already agreed to put in place regional and national EOA coordinating structures. The Ministry of Agriculture was aware of this, *but there has as yet been no approval regarding the setting up of a national coordinating structure for EOA in Ethiopia*. In any case, Dr. Yitbarek said, each regional state in Ethiopia has its own mandate and methods of doing things – an additional impediment to establishment of any such National Steering Committee.

Ato Abadi, on his part emphasized that now was the time for EOA to take centre stage, and it was therefore important to decide who to approach in government, in order to spearhead the issue of EOA and the setting up of a coordinating structure.

Dr Yohannes stressed that a “voice” for EOA is essential and now is the right time to make it heard. Ethiopia had signed a solidarity pact with other African states, and it was therefore necessary to revisit solutions regarding farmers, by establishing small but vibrant farmers’ groups and making their “voice” heard at the AU.

Mr Asrat Mengesha informed the workshop that at a recent meeting in Debre Zeit, the Minister of State for Agriculture responsible for soil fertility had encouraged NGOs to fully promote EOA. Mr Asrat thus enquired why the Ministry cannot revisit the rules to ease things for civil society. He was of the opinion that NGOs involved in EOA should be exempt from the 70/30 stipulation. *He strongly suggested that a committee should be established to approach the government on this issue. This suggestion was seconded by Dr Tenaw, who said that there is a law encouraging those involved in promoting EOA to go ahead and therefore a committee should be set up to approach and start discussions with the government in this regard.*

Ms Sue Edwards emphasized that the National Platform should be composed of organizations and not individuals. There was a need to be as correct, democratic and diplomatic as possible. If the Ministry of Agriculture is prepared to coordinate and chair the National Platform, a CLO, chosen from either the government or civil society, could serve as secretary. Dr Yitbarek agreed with her comment that the committee should represent organizations and not individuals, but said that the issue of *resources* involved in setting up the platform should also be looked at simultaneously and in detail.

Ms Vanencia Wambua (BvAT) admitted that she had not been briefed much about the Ethiopian scenario, particularly relating to the establishment of national coordinating mechanisms on EOA. She agreed that the situation was different in every country, but felt that there were always ways around issues.

Dr Getachew Tikubet (Bioeconomy Africa) reminded the participants that the most important thing is the agenda at hand. He asked rhetorically what are we trying to promote; it is the interests of 80% of the population of Ethiopia. He stressed that the government had come up with solid initiatives in its Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) *and it was thus important for those involved in EOA to try to fit their activities within the context of both GTP1 and GTP2, (currently under discussion), and their various programs dealing with the elimination of poverty, promotion of food security and the creation of a Green Economy.* Most importantly, *Dr Getachew said, EOA had been endorsed by the AU, of which Ethiopia is a member, and there were continental mechanisms in place to promote OA, which is*

encouraging. However, he warned, it was not simply a question of meeting and deciding everything all at once. It should be agreed on what can and cannot be accomplished at this workshop.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND REPORTS

Ms Sue Edwards said that it was necessary to identify representatives from different sections in the diagram entitled “Mainstreaming the Ecological Agriculture Initiative in Africa”, see above. The plenary was then divided up into three different groups, the first on Agriculture (chaired by Dr Hailu Araya of ISD), the second on Private Enterprises and Civil Society (chaired by Ms Azeb Worku of ISD), and the third on Research and Training (chaired by Mr Berihu Araya also of ISD). Each group was tasked with identifying and selecting members of a National Steering Committee and an interim Country Lead Organization.

The criteria for selecting members of a National Steering Committee centred on:

- ✓ How influential/successful they are in implementing EOA
- ✓ Whether they are important agencies, and,
- ✓ Whether they are able to influence policy makers

After the three groups had discussed on the above, the rapporteurs summarized their suggestions for the National EOA Steering Committee and the interim Country Lead Organization, as set out in the following table:

<i>Group 1: Agriculture</i>	<i>Group 2: Private Enterprises and Civil Society</i>	<i>Group 3: Research and Education</i>
National EOA Steering Committee (NESC) / National Stakeholder Platform		
Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Environment and Forest Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) Model farmers Cooperative Agency Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute, (formerly Institute of Biodiversity Conservation)	Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Environment and Forest ECOPIA (Private Sector) Ethiopian Standards Agency Farmers (Oromia Coffee Union)	Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Environment and Forest Agriculture Transformation Agency (ATA) Universities EIAR Organic producers and processors National Biogas Program of Ethiopia (NBPE) Agriculture and Pastoralist Standing Committee of the House of Peoples' Representatives
Interim Country Lead Organization (CLO)		
ISD BioEconomy Africa	ISD BioEconomy Africa	ISD

CLOSING REMARKS

In her Closing Remarks, Ms Sue thanked the participants for attending and sharing their thoughts, suggestions and experiences. She was particularly appreciative of the Swiss Government through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for their firm five-year support for the EOA Initiative. Sue said that she, her colleagues and partners would do their best to achieve its objectives. Sue also expressed her thanks to ECOPIA and PANOS, adding that they had expressed serious interest to be involved in national EOA activities as active partners. On behalf of ISD, she also accepted the responsibility of becoming the interim CLO and would be following up with how to go forward from the present Inception workshop.

Sue admitted that currently, only a little research and training focused on EOA was being carried out, and there was not good communication and coordination among the various actors. Joint planning would be carried out in order to delineate responsibilities for each activity, build synergy and increased efficiency. She said that she would be meeting with Dr Getachew Tikubet of BioEconomy Africa for advice on the way forward on this and other issues. She again thanked everyone present for ensuring that the workshop was a success and declared the workshop ended.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 : LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN ISD/BVAT INCEPTION WORKSHOP ON EOA, 29 APRIL 2014

S. No.	Name	Sex	Organization Represented
1.	Mellese Damtie	M	Ethiopian Civil Service University
2.	TesfaneshBekele	F	Farmer – Wondo Genet SNNP
3.	Sisay Bogale	M	“ – South Wollo
4.	Aberra Bekele	M	Melkassa Agricultural Research Institute
5.	Dr Asmare Dejen	M	Wollo University
6.	Dr Abadi Girmay	M	TARI (Tigray Agricultural Research Inst.)
7.	Dr Shiferaw Alem	M	Ministry of Environment and Forest
8.	Dr Yibarek Nigatu	M	Millennium Institute / BioVison
9.	Dr Tenaw Workayehu	M	Hawassa Agricultural Research Centre
10.	Dr Getachew Tikubet	M	BioEconomy Africa
11.	Berhanu Rabo	M	Ethiopian Sugar Corporation
12.	Wubishet Demissie	M	Ministry of Agriculture
13.	Manuel Flury	M	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
14.	Hailemariam Mesfin	M	PANOS-East Africa
15.	Beza Dejene	M	House of Peoples’ Representatives
16.	Zemenu Genet	M	PAN-Ethiopia
17.	Regasa Aboma	M	CCRDA
18.	Seble Mamo	F	ECOPIA
19.	Julia Smid	F	“
20.	Ejigayehu Gizaw	F	HOAREC/N
21.	Belete Yimer	M	Wollo University
22.	Yohannes G/Mariam	M	Addis Ababa University
23.	Venancia Wambua	F	Biovision Africa Trust
24.	Sue Edwards	F	ISD
25.	Dr Hailu Araya	M	“
26.	Binyam Worku	M	“
27.	Mifta Ahmed	M	“
28.	Berihu Araya	M	“
29.	Redwan Mohamed	M	“
30.	Nigussie H/Mariam	M	“
31.	Selam Yilma	F	“
32.	Asrat Mengesha	M	“
33.	Dawit Abraham	M	Consultant/Rapporteur

ANNEX 2: PROGRAMME—EOA INCEPTION MEETING, 29TH APRIL 2014, ELILLY HOTEL, ADDIS ABABA, ORGANIZED BY ISD AND BVAT

Time	Topics	Presenter/ responsible	Facilitator
8:30-9:00	Registration	ISD staff	Gizaw Gebremariam
9:00-9:30	Opening speech	Dr. Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher	
9.30-9.45	Participants introduce themselves		
9.45-10.00	Overview and expectations for the EOA Initiative in Ethiopia	Ms Sue Edwards	
10:00-10:20	Coffee/Tea break		
10:20-10:50	Ethiopian smallholder farmers experiences of EOA	Dr. Hailu Araya + farmers	Dr. Yitbarek Nigatu
10:50-11:20	The legal framework for developing EOA in Ethiopia	Melesse Damtie	
11:20-11:50	Overview of the organic sector in Ethiopia	Azeb Worku	
11:50-12:15	General Discussion		
12:15-13:30	Lunch	Berihu + Mifta	
13:30-14:00	The Ecological Organic Agriculture in Africa: SDC Support Contribution and Role of Bivision Africa Trust	Ms Venancia Wambua	Ms Sue Edwards
14:00-14:30	General Discussion	Ms Sue Edwards	
14.30-15.30	Group discussion to identify members of National Steering Committee, Country Lead Organization and Project Implementing Partners	Each group identifies a rapporteur	
15.30-16:00	Coffee/Tea Break	Rapporteurs prepare presentation	
16:00-16:30	Presentations from Group (10 minutes each)	Rapporteurs	
16:30-17:00	General discussion to select members of National Steering Committee, Country Lead Organization and Project Implementing Partners	Mr Berhanu Ayalew	
17:00-17:15	Closing	Ms Sue Edwards	

Group 1 - Agriculture - Chairperson, Dr Hailu Araya

Group 2 - Private enterprises and Civil Society, Ms Azeb Worku

Group 3 - Research and Education, Mr Berihu Araya