

Agricultural Innovation and Technology Centers (AITEC)

AN INNOVATION OF THE SEQOTA DECLARATION, ETHIOPIA'S COMMITMENT TO END STUNTING

2

AITEC
demonstration
farms

2

Training,
demonstration and
research sites

12

Innovative
water technologies

THE PROBLEM

Key takeaways from the Seqota Declaration baseline findings include high prevalence of household food insecurity, low use of agricultural technology and high post-harvest losses. Despite access to land, production of diversified food is very low and is reflected in low dietary diversity in pregnant and lactating women and children. Households have very low contact with agriculture extension workers and low participation in trainings and community groups could be contributing to poor uptake of improved agricultural practices and technologies. Only 1 in 10 households use small-scale irrigation techniques. The productivity of smallholder farmers is hampered by low access to agricultural inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers, and small ruminants. Overall, there are missed opportunities for improving nutrition outcomes.

THE SOLUTION

Technological progress and innovation are essential for sustainable development and are major determinants of long-term improvements in income and living standards. Recognizing that Israel shares similar challenging terrain and climatic factors with Ethiopia, Big Win Philanthropy contracted the services of CultivAid, an Israeli non-profit organization to implement a knowledge and technology transfer program in support of the Seqota Declaration. As part of this initiative, Big Win Philanthropy arranged for the coalition of Federal Ministers and Regional Presidents to conduct a site visit to Israel to draw on their expertise in water and agricultural management. The visit inspired the Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy to commission geo-spatial satellite imaging of water sources in the entire Tekeze river basin. Likewise, the Minister of Agriculture endorsed the establishment of two Agricultural Innovation and Technology Centers (AITEC) – one for each region.

AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY CENTERS (AITEC)

Agricultural Innovation and Technology Centers are medium-scale, economically self-sustainable farms that act as a regional mechanism for agricultural development, extension, research, capacity building and overall transformation of the agriculture sector. The concept is based on Israel's research and development farms that serve as a critical component in developing the country's agricultural knowledge and unique and vibrant agricultural sector and is deemed relevant to Ethiopia's context.

AITEC farms serve as pathways for the integrated introduction and demonstration of innovations and technologies for horticulture, crop farming and livestock production that improve the productivity of smallholder farmers. Designs for 20-hectares AITEC farms are now completed for West Belesa woreda of Amhara Regional State and Tanqua Abergele woreda of Tigray Regional State.

BANK OF WATER TECHNOLOGIES AND SOLUTIONS

The Bank of Water Technologies and Solutions aims to introduce and pilot various technologies related to water management, storage, quality, transport, monitoring and irrigation utilization. With an overarching emphasis on the need of doing things differently, the Bank of Water Technologies and Solutions is informed by four guiding principles: (i) Piloting technologies while building local capacity; (ii) Professional management for all cadres of staff in the water sector; (iii) Establishment of a logistical and technical support center; and (iv) Development of project designs for long-term functionality.

CultivAid has finalized the Bank of Water Technologies and Solutions which now requires the endorsement by regional governments and mobilization of resources to implement the prioritized technologies.

Sisay Sinamo (MD, MPH, PhD)
Senior Program Manager, Seqota Declaration,
Federal Program Delivery Unit
Ministry of Health, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 911 510 988
Email: seniorprogrammanagerfpdu@gmail.com



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TRAINING, DEMONSTRATION AND RESEARCH PROGRAM

With guidance from the Seqota Declaration Delivery Unit, CultivAid has developed a Training, Demonstration and Research Program (TDR) that aims to establish 2-hectare sites at Axum and Gondar Universities. The sites will be equipped with drip irrigation, sprinklers, greenhouses, seedling nursery, and advanced agro-techniques to facilitate the development of Ethiopia's agricultural knowledge infrastructure and to support a new generation of farmers. The draft designs for the two sites have been completed.



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Senior Program Manager, Seqota Declaration,
Federal Program Delivery Unit
Ministry of Health, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 911 510 988
Email: seniorprogrammanagerfpdu@gmail.com

