

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN AGRICULTURE: CASE OF IPMS-ETHIOPIA

Fanos Mekonnen, Ermias Sehai and Dirk Hoekstra

Objective: Improving Productivity and Market Success (IPMS) project aimed at developing Agricultural Knowledge Management systems at different levels in the extension system for improved access to knowledge on technology and institutional innovation.

Approaches: The project focused on selected knowledge management tools, approaches, and methods that are relevant and practical to the on-the-ground realities of the extension staff, development agents and farmers in the districts in which it operates. The project approach linked knowledge management and capacity development for development of market oriented agriculture.

Knowledge Management

1. Knowledge Capturing



Knowledge centers were set up and equipped with computers, TV/DVD players, books, manuals, periodicals...



study tours and on job training with field visits were organized



Students working on their thesis research

2. Knowledge Storing



Ethiopian Agriculture Portal (EAP) - www.eap.gov.et a web-based repository of agricultural documents and information relevant to Ethiopia. Offline version of the portal is available for places with limited internet connection.

3. Knowledge Sharing



Workshops, seminars



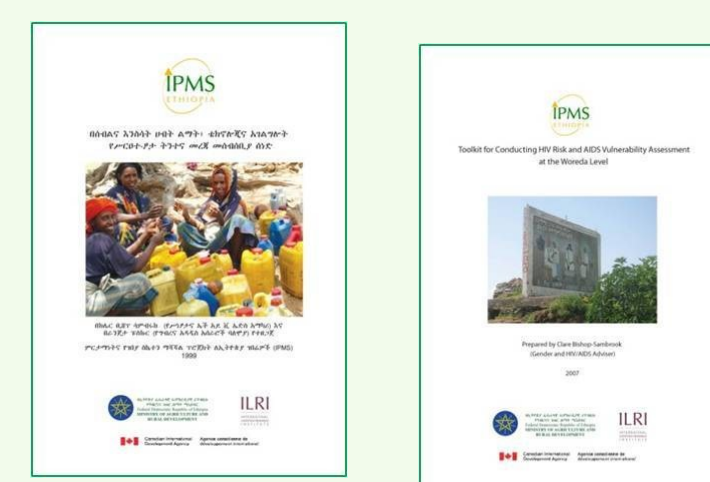
Exhibitions and farmer to farmer exchanges



Farmers' field days, study tours, exchange visits, seminars, videos radios and exhibitions are held to help advance knowledge sharing on specific topics and to help develop a knowledge sharing culture.



Short videos on commodity value chain development and written documentations were produced for knowledge storing and sharing.



Achievements

- ◆ 28 fully equipped knowledge centers in the regions, zones and districts were made functional.
- ◆ Strengthened and capacitated 40 FTCs.
- ◆ Produced seven commodity videos and distributed DVDs for scaling out best practices.
- ◆ Developed and partly institutionalized the Ethiopian Agriculture Portal (www.eap.gov.et).
- ◆ Published 30 working papers that documented lessons, studies, and research analysis.
- ◆ Supported 120 MSc thesis research work.
- ◆ Broadcasted participatory agricultural radio series in local languages.
- ◆ Promoted collection and dissemination of market information at district level.

Lessons

- ◆ There is a need for an overall understanding of knowledge as a critical 'input' to agricultural development. This needs to be internalized among program implementers at all levels.
- ◆ It is crucial that KM strategies are coupled with capacity development strategies of a program for an efficient and sustainable impact.

Capacity Development

Strengthened capacity of institutions and staff through:

- ◆ Formal and in-service training for experts at extension offices
- ◆ Capacitating Farmer training centers for enhanced knowledge management
- ◆ Supporting MSc and BSc trainings and research initiatives
- ◆ Developing knowledge management infrastructure in Ministry of Agriculture
- ◆ Creating/strengthening linkages with commodity value chain actors