



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

STRENGTHENING SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE IN ETHIOPIA: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT, CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD

The Technical Support to the Second Agricultural Growth Program (TS-AGP-II) formed an integral component of Ethiopia's broader Agricultural Growth Program (AGP-II), implemented with technical assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and financial support from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP). The project was designed to strengthen the organizational and human capacities of national and local agricultural institutions to deliver effective and sustainable extension services that improve the productivity, commercialization and resilience of smallholder farmers.

Ethiopia's agriculture, dominated by smallholder rainfed farming, remains highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and constrained by low productivity, weak pest management and insufficient livestock feed resources. In response, the project focused on three core thematic areas: (i) improved forage development to enhance livestock productivity and feed supply; (ii) promotion of integrated pest management (IPM) practices for sustainable crop protection; and (iii) mainstreaming of crosscutting issues including climate-smart agriculture (CSA), nutrition-sensitive agriculture (NSA), gender equality and, later, on-farm water and crop management (WCM) and post-harvest management (PHM) were included in response to COVID-19 challenges.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Capacity development was central to the project approach, addressing critical gaps within government implementing agencies through comprehensive training programmes. A cascade training model was used to build the skills of extension staff and smallholder farmers. Two rounds of training of trainers (ToT) were conducted for federal, regional, zonal and *woreda* (district)-level experts. Training needs assessments informed the development of competency-based curricula covering forage development, IPM, CSA, NSA, gender-sensitive interventions, WCM and PHM, alongside soft skills and digital literacy.

Practical training and demonstrations were carried out through farmer field schools (FFS) established in farmers' fields and farmer training centres. Experience-sharing events involved over 15 000 participants, including non-target farmers, which encouraged wider replication of good agricultural practices (GAP).

Specific achievements under each component included the adoption of location-specific forage species and crop–livestock integration practices; promotion of IPM for major crop–pest combinations, leading to reduced pesticide use and higher yields; and implementation of CSA and NSA practices to strengthen resilience and improve nutrition outcomes. Gender sensitive interventions encouraged women's participation in gardening, poultry and dairy production, with labour-saving technologies introduced to support women farmers. The project also developed and disseminated a range of knowledge products, including manuals, leaflets, posters and technical guidelines, to support continuous learning and sustainability of results.

KEY FACTS

Latest Approved Budget
USD 4 000 000

Duration
January 2018–March 2025

Resource Partner
Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP)

Partner
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)

Beneficiaries
Smallholder farmers and rural producers, extension staff, development agents and government implementing agencies

IMPACT

The project improved the capacity of extension experts, development agents and smallholder farmers to deliver and adopt effective agricultural practices. Rapid and internal impact assessments confirmed strong results, including improved technical competencies, increased adoption of GAP and enhanced institutional performance across project woredas. Approximately 90 percent of key informants reported positive attitudinal change among trainees, while 80 percent observed substantial knowledge gains. Adoption rates were highest for CSA (77 percent), followed by gender-sensitive and NSA interventions (67 percent), forage development (66 percent) and IPM (55 percent). As a result, nearly 11 000 farmers adopted improved practices, with over 75 percent adopting four to six technologies through the FFS approach. Farmers reported increased crop yields and livestock productivity, higher incomes, improved food security and better nutrition outcomes. Among adopters, 82 percent experienced improved food security, 81 percent improved nutrition, 77 percent higher income and 60 percent increased crop yields. The participatory nature of the FFS approach also generated positive spillover effects, influencing non-target farmers to adopt improved practices and strengthening community-level empowerment. Overall, the project laid the groundwork for scaling up climate-resilient, nutrition-sensitive and gender responsive agricultural development through government-led initiatives and future FAO-supported programmes.

ACTIVITIES

- Trained over 7 000 extension staff across federal, regional, zonal and woreda levels, who subsequently trained 24 029 smallholder farmers, benefiting a total of 117 220 individuals.
- Established 402 FFSs and multiple demonstration sites covering forage development, IPM, CSA, NSA, on-farm WCM and PHM.
- Implemented 96 forage demonstration sites, 65 WCM demonstrations, 115 NSA and gender-focused sites, and 24 PHM demonstration sites.
- Supported the adoption of improved agricultural practices by nearly 11 000 farmers, with over 75 percent adopting 4–6 technologies through the FFS approach.
- Conducted experience-sharing events involving 15 647 participants, including both target and non-target farmers, to promote farmer-to-farmer learning and wider adoption of GAP.
- Developed and disseminated a variety of knowledge products including manuals, guidelines, posters, leaflets and training materials, supporting ongoing capacity development and sustainability of project interventions.

Project Title

Technical Support to the Second Agricultural Growth Program (TS-AGP-II)



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