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Lowland wheat initiative kicks off in Ethiopia

ATA supported Agricultural One Stop Shops (AOSS) that will provide smallholder farmers access to agricultural inputs inaugurated in Oromia, Amahara, SNNP and Tigray regions.

The centers are owned by private business and aim to increase smallholder farmers' productivity, ensure food security and improve incomes through expanding access to agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals, veterinary drugs and farm tools. They will also provide counseling and trainings services to smallholder farmers on agronomy practices and agricultural technology uses. Each center provides services to more than 10,000 smallholder farmers in the surrounding area.

The inauguration ceremonies were attended by various delegates from the regional bureaus, representatives from the woreda and

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ATA trains mechanization service centers support staff

ATA has graduated 30 young individuals in Combine Harvester and Tractor operation in Shashemene. The graduation ceremony held on 7 September 2019 was attended by officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, regional agriculture offices, invited guests, media and family members of the graduates. Speaking at the ceremony, Mechanization Services Pilot Project Leader at the ATA, Ato Gebre Gebretsadik congratulated the graduating operators and underscored their

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ATA conducts a validation workshop on shallow groundwater mapping results

The Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) organized a validation workshop in Adama on Shallow Groundwater Mapping conducted in identified study areas of Chancho-Mehal Meda, Kofale-Goba, Adigrat-Abergele and Harari Region on 7 August 2019. The workshop was attended by ATA leadership, key stakeholders from federal and regional government bodies, NGOs, international organizations, academia and the business sector.

The workshop was inaugurated by opening remarks from Dr Chimdo Anchala, Senior Director of ATA Production & Productivity Vertical, underscored the crucial role identifying shallow groundwater resources plays in improving the livelihoods and productivity of smallholder farmers.

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Lowland wheat initiative kicks off in Ethiopia

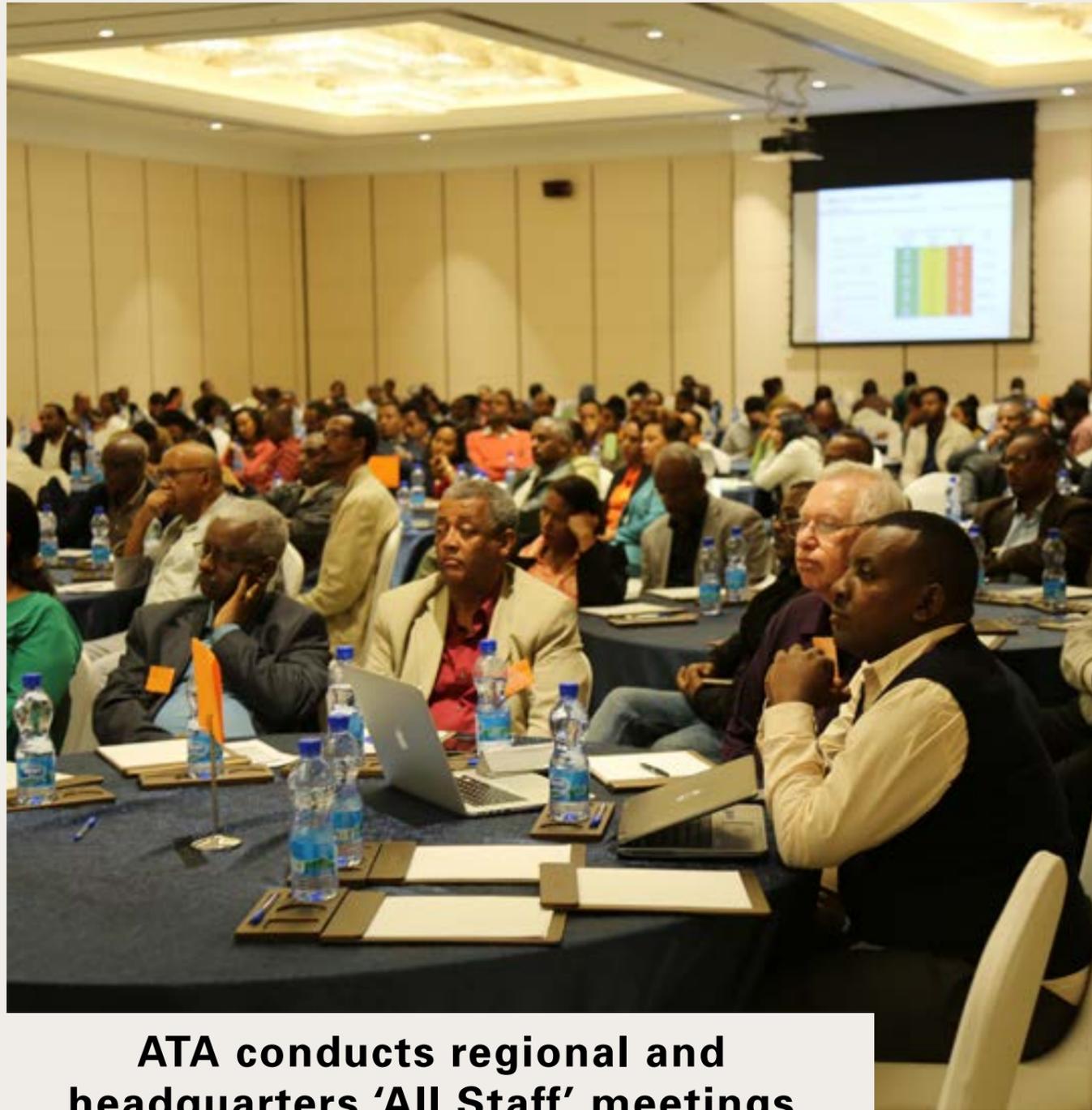
The Ethiopian Agriculture Transformation Agency (ATA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Council Secretariat (EARCS), regional bureaus of agriculture, and other stakeholders has recently launched an initiative to produce wheat in three lowland basins of the country. This initiative is being implemented in Awash (Oromia and Afar regions), Wabeshebelle (Somali Region), and Omo (Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR)) basins, locations where wheat production was not previously practiced.

Lowland wheat production was successfully demonstrated in Awash and Omo basins in 2018/2019 (2011 E.C.). In the new Ethiopian year, the initiative will be demonstrated on 1,500 hectares along the Awash basin, 3,200 hectares along the Wabeshebelle basin, and on 660 hectares along the Omo basin. Additionally, there is a plan to move to largescale production in Awash and Wabeshebelle basins on more than 32,000 and 3,200 hectares, respectively. “The implementation of the lowland wheat project will contribute to achieving Ethiopia’s import substitution efforts in the long term, and will also have an immediate positive impact on improving the livelihoods

of the farmers and pastoralists residing in the implementation areas,” Dr Kebere Bezawelew, ATA Senior Project Officer, Crop Value Chain, commenting on the significance of the lowland wheat initiative to ensuring food self-sufficiency and improving the lives and livelihoods of Ethiopian smallholders. The ATA and the EARCS are jointly engaged in demonstration of lowland wheat along the Omo basin. They have already mobilized the required agricultural inputs and provided training and technical support. The MoA will engage in controlling birds that destroy the wheat farm during plantation and harvesting periods, while EIAR will provide cross-cutting technical support to the initiative in all three basins in addition to the lowland wheat

project it runs in the Awash basin. Both smallholder and commercial farmers in the targeted regions have demonstrated their willingness to be involved in the project. At full implementation, the lowland wheat initiative will cover more than 132,000 hectares of land across the three basins and is expected to produce nearly 6 million quintals of wheat along with more than 100,000 quintals of improved wheat seeds. Combined with the existing support to increase production and productivity in the Ethiopian highlands, this lowland wheat project will make significant contributions towards achieving Ethiopia’s plan to gradually replace importation as laid out in the country’s import substitution strategy.





ATA conducts regional and headquarters 'All Staff' meetings

A series of All Staff meetings were conducted in all four ATA regional offices and at the HQ level on 29 August 2019. During the meetings the 2011 performances of the regional ATA office, HQ verticals and their 2012 plans were presented. The meetings also served as a platform for fostering collaboration and learning amongst team members, sharing knowledge and strengthening team spirit across teams as well as within teams.

The meeting also saw "Transformer of the Year" award given to staff members who have shown exceptionally and consistently demonstrating a high degree of excellence, professionalism, integrity, and proven willingness to support their colleagues was held. These individuals who inspire ATA staff to live the agency's values and contribute further to the development of Ethiopia were named "Transformer of the Year".



A public consultation workshop on EthioSIS lays groundwork for data sharing

A public consultation workshop organized by the ATA on EthioSIS data sharing protocol for participants coming from research institutes, universities, development partners and media was conducted on 10 July 2019.

For the past seven years, the ATA has been working on EthioSIS to develop soil fertility status, fertilizer recommendations, digital soil maps and solve challenges related to fertilizer applications. The project has mapped the soil fertility statuses and fertilizer recommendations of all 748 agricultural woredas in Ethiopia. The project has analyzed more than 97% of the country's agricultural

soils using extensive soil sampling and remote sensing satellite imagery. Vast data has been collected throughout the five-year process and has undergone hours of analysis and processing.

As of today, EthioSIS project data are not publicly available. However, the MoA and ATA, in collaboration with partners, are working to on data sharing policy protocol to make the data accessible for federal and regional research institutes, development practitioners and individuals. The workshop has laid the groundwork on how to proceed with sharing the collected data.



ATA hosts high level visits from development partners

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Representatives from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation paid a visit to an Avocado Cluster farm in Lume Woreda, East Shoa Zone, Oromia Region on 31 July 2019. The visit involved briefing by the ATA Oromia Region Office on the status of the farms and performance of the farmers followed by site visits to the fruit farms.

The delegates had a discussion session with the smallholder farmers of Shera Dibandiba

village that are participating in the Avocado Cluster farms, wherein they learned first-hand about the performance, challenges and prospects of the smallholder farmers. Following the conclusion of the site visit, the delegates returned to Addis and concluded their visit with a debriefing at the ATA Headquarters, where the delegates met with ATA Senior Management and shared their observations and discussed on the way forward.



Danish Minister of Development Cooperation

His Excellency Mr Rasmus Prehn, Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark visited development projects in Wukro Town of Tigray Regional State on 8 August 2019. Also present during the visit were His Excellency Mr. Gebregziabher Gebreyohannes, Ethiopian State Minister of Agriculture; Dr. Atinkut Mezgebu, Head of the Tigray Regional Bureau of Agriculture; Mr. Kiros Bitew, Economic Cluster Coordinator and Advisor to the Deputy President of Tigray Regional State Dr. Debretsion G/Michael, and other delegates. The high-level visit included sight visits to an agricultural commercialization cluster

and an agricultural one-stop shop, as well as briefings on other projects implemented by the Government of Ethiopia in collaboration with the ATA and other partners to transform the agriculture sector and benefit smallholder farmers.

ATA CEO Khalid Bomba held fruitful discussions with H.E. Mr Prehn at the end of the visit recapping highlights of the visit and sharing views on the way forward. Following the visit and discussion, Mr. Prehn expressed his appreciation of the work that has been done to improve the capacity and lives of smallholder farmers. He also confirmed his government's commitment to support development projects such as the ones seen during the visit.



Members of Club DEMETER visit ATA

A French Delegation from the Club DEMETER visited the ATA and held a panel discussion with members of ATA Leadership and Senior Management on 19 September 2019. Club DEMETER is a collaborative ecosystem for foresight thinking and studies that brings together 61 French/European agro-food companies and professional associations, but also 3 ministries and 16 universities/schools in France.

For this visit, 40 participants from 27 countries attended a panel discussion where they listened to presentations on the current status of the agriculture sector and investment opportunities within it, and asked questions.

The meeting was an important one as the delegation comprised high-level decision makers of large corporate companies with the power and mandate to decide if it is worth investing in and engaging with Ethiopia.



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The workshop was inaugurated by opening remarks from Dr Chimdo Anchala, Senior Director of ATA Production & Productivity Vertical, underscored the crucial role identifying shallow groundwater resources plays in improving the livelihoods and productivity of smallholder farmers. He

also emphasized on the need of bringing stakeholders together for the success of the project.

The workshop aimed at receiving valuable feedback and inputs from federal and regional stakeholders who will be playing a significant role, and critically make an impact on, the development of shallow groundwater at the household level.

The outcome of the validation workshop will also be useful for future enrichment of the quality of the mapping of shallow groundwater resources as well as to improve the employed methodologies, and technologies to enhance the accuracy level at the required scale of development.



ATA trains mechanization service centers support staff

ATA has graduated 30 young individuals in Combine Harvester and Tractor operation in Shashemene. The graduation ceremony held on 7 September 2019 was attended by officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, regional agriculture offices, invited guests, media and family members of the graduates. Speaking at the ceremony, Mechanization Services Pilot Project Leader at the ATA, Ato Gebre Gebretsadik congratulated the graduating operators and underscored their responsibility to help the smallholder farmers in their locality, and assured them that their new skills will play an important role in increasing production and productivity and minimizing the burden of the farmers.

The Mechanization Service pilot project will enable smallholder farmers to get access to mechanization services in an affordable price in key value chain activities such as ploughing, planting, cultivation and harvesting/threshing by creating access to high-quality machinery and competent operators.

The project aims to establish ten mechanization service centers in Oromia, Amhara, SNNP and Tigray regions. These centers will enable smallholder farmers to access affordable and fee-based agricultural mechanization services which in turn will increase smallholder farmers' access to environmentally friendly and energy-efficient agricultural mechanization services