

VEGGIES 4 PLANET & PEOPLE (V4P&P) PROJECT

LEARNING EVENT REPORT



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARCs	Agricultural Research Centers
ATA	Agricultural Transformation Agency
BoANR	Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources
BoFEC	Bureau of Finance and Economic Cooperation
DARC	Debre Zeit Agricultural Research Centre
GAP	Good agricultural practices
HARC	Holeta Agricultural Research Centre
IPM	Integrated pest management
MARC	Melkassa Agricultural Research Centre
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
RA	Regenerative agriculture
TAVs	Traditional African vegetables
ToR	Terms of reference
ToTs	Training of trainers
V4P&P	Veggies4Planet&People
VBN	Vegetable business network
ZECC	Zero-energy cooling chamber

1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE V4P&P PROJECT

The project 'Veggies 4 Planet & People (V4P&P)' commenced in March 2021 and aims at creating jobs and income for women and youth in the vegetable sector and to improve environmental and human health through safe production of vegetables, strengthening the vegetable sector in Kenya and Ethiopia to improve people's health, increase employment and safeguard the environment. A five-year project, it is funded by the IKEA Foundation, and works with diverse partners to advance vegetable quality, environmentally friendly production and value chain efficiency, while boosting demand for local veggies. The project involves the World Vegetable Centre (WorldVeg), SNV, Local Government Authorities, local NGOs, business mentors MFOs, seed companies, AFSTA, AVBC as well as local policy and decision makers.

ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE CONSULTANCY

Paulos Desalegn, independent consultant, was assigned to facilitate the learning event and write the report. As indicated in the Terms of Reference (ToR), the objective of the consultancy was to prepare and facilitate a learning event for the Veggies 4 Planet & People project in Ethiopia, and to document the outcomes of the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was an internal reflection on what the project has achieved since its inception, to share learnings among project staff and implementing partners, and incorporate lessons in the way forward.

The specific objectives of the meeting were:

1. Share outputs and outcomes of the project
2. Review the four main project innovations: development of vegetable business networks, regenerative agricultural practices, seed and input systems, and policies
3. Learn about the ICRA Agribusiness Cluster approach in relation to the Vegetable Business Network (VBN) approach
4. Fine-tune the project implementation strategy where appropriate
5. Send out messages generated from our experiences to the outside world

METHODS AND APPROACHES USED DURING THE LEARNING EVENT

The learning event conducted from October 13 – 14 in Radisson Blue Hotel in Addis Ababa. In addition to the project team, main partners' representatives participated in the learning event. The meeting comprised face-to-face and virtual participants.

A combination of method and tools were used as indicated in the detail workshop schedule (Annex 1). The presentation of main research results and concepts, personal and group reflection, gallery walk, world café, parallel working groups, plenary discussion, video, cards, and using others reflected and captured the lessons in a participatory way. The meeting started with an introductory activity that comprised

introductory remarks, introduction of participants, expectations, and explanation of the learning event's main objectives.

The project's principal investigator (PI), Ralph Roothaert made an introductory remark and made a brief presentation to set the scene of the learning event. In his introductory remark:

- He welcomed the different stakeholders and talked about the mission of the World Vegetable Center.
- He then highlighted the significance of organizing a learning event for the Veggies4Planet&People (V4P&P) project. Ralph pointed out that the inception workshop for the project had been held in February 2021. The main objective of the learning workshop was to assess what went well and what did not go well during the first-year implementation of the project so that lessons can be shared, and that improvements could be made. There is a need to reflect on the four project outcomes: regenerative agriculture (RA), seed systems, vegetable business networks and policy and media environment.
- He also spoke about the ABC approach of ICRA and the need to compare it with the VBN approach and carry forward the best experiences.

Setting the Scene

Ralph in his presentation shared:

- The background of the project
- The partners of the project
- The specific objective of the project
- The theory of change
- The inception phase work plan
- Elevator pitch

Research and other presentations

Yidnekachew Zewde presented his main findings of the Participatory Rural Appraisal and a consultant team from FSiAbd Consult presented their main findings of the Value Chain Study. Rosina Wanyama shared the baseline main findings. On the second day, Paola Cardona shared healthy seedlings and integrated pest management (IPM) experimental plans and Rosina presented key performance indicators (KPIs) data collection process as part of the monitoring, evaluation and learning session. In all the presentations, participants raised questions for clarification and provided suggestions to refine the research findings.



Reflection and harvesting lessons

Following the research presentations, reflection sessions were conducted to capture lessons and formulate the way forward. Main messages and discussion points of the different session are highlighted in the following sections.

2. PARTICIPANTS' EXPECTATIONS AND ANY DEVIATION FROM THE PLANNED PROGRAM

Using the on-line slido.com application on their mobile phones, participants shared their expectations of the learning event. The expectations were:

- Update on progress
- Share own experiences
- Know project outputs
- Understand the baseline
- See areas of collaboration
- Understand the program
- Making improvements
- Evaluate the innovations

The most cited expectation was 'know the project outputs'

3. RESEARCH RESULTS: DISCUSSION POINTS RESULTING FROM THE PRESENTATIONS

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

The main findings of the PRA on the seed system presented. Following the presentation, the participants raised clarification questions and emphasized qualifying information per commodity type and market chain.

Points raised and responses shared included:

- Informal sectors produce seeds by their own. They are created due to lack of supply of seeds by the formal one like the Farm Service Centres who are distributing imported seed.
- Clarify who are the informal actors mentioned in the study?
 - Trader and middlemen are part of the market force sometimes considered as informal actors. The product-selling price is not decided by market force rather the middlemen and traders are influencing the price decision.
- Who is responsible to develop new kale seed?
 - Holeta Agricultural Research Center (HARC)
- Why middlemen for some crops but not for others?
 - Because of scale and value of production. The total value of the supply chain attracts middlemen as is the case with tomato, onion and pepper. For some crops the scale and value of production is quite small and can be accommodated in the local market without the middlemen.
- Seed and input systems are innovation areas of the project. Why are not focusing on vegetables?
 - Not investigated specifically in the study but it is observed that the Farm Service Centres are under resourced and under staffed.
- Nutrition improvement is the focus of the project. Desirability characteristics of the **consumer** should guide production rather than desirability characteristics of the **producers**.
- Onion price fluctuation is a well-known issue, what is the project intervention to address that?
 - Storage facilities could extend sales periods.
- It was proposed to consider more high performing varieties of onion available in the country for promotion, such as Nafiz.
- The tomato variety Gelila is referred by farmers as Kochoro variety.
- Commented to use commercial vegetables terminology than using global vegetables as for the category.
 - It was argued by V4PP team traditional vegetables could become commercial so the global vegetables would be the appropriate naming for that category.
- There are many Traditional African Vegetables (TAVs) available in the country in addition to Kale. Why didn't you consider like Amaranth and okra?
 - We focussed on known market-oriented crops. Others can be considered in the following years.

Value Chain Analysis

Following the presentation of the VCA study initial findings, questions for clarification, and strong debate emerged on the share of farmers on the final price and gross margin analysis. Learning event participants

mentioned that in the past, based on perceptions, vegetable farmers were getting low gross margins. To avoid biased conclusions, it was advised to base the study findings on gross margins and look at the evidence critically.

The following additional issues were raised and discussed:

- The value chain selection was done at woreda level and validated through FGD and KII at farmers' level. The selection of crops was questioned by some participants.
 - The researcher reflected that the potential vegetables were longlisted using the data at woreda level and further prioritized and rejected with the participation of farmers.
- The study did not show potential markets willing to buy safe vegetables produced through regenerative practice.
 - The researchers conducted interviews with potential markets for safe vegetables such as universities, supermarkets, market centres, etc. and agreed to capture them in the final study report.
- Some more comments from participants were:
 - Some actors along the value chain are missing.
 - Farmers' grievance of the middlemen: how can the project deals with middlemen? How to improve the market and for which crops?
 - Is there any intention of developing quality standardization among vegetable stakeholders?
 - Skills and ethics are some of the bottlenecks mentioned. Skill can be addressed but how do you influence ethics?

The value chain researchers welcomed comments and questions raised and agreed to address them in their final report.

Farmer Experimentation Protocol

After the presentation, participants grouped in to four to discuss and plan the research. The questions and responses of the groups are summarized below:

Group 1: How do we select farmers for the on-farm integrated pest management (IPM) trials and in which places?

- In all the project sites: work with a lead farmer who practices the recommended package very well, or semi-commercial farmer.

Group 2: Who will collect data for the on-farm trials?

- VBN coaches and officers
- Development agents (DAs)
- Woreda (district) crop protection experts
- Woreda (district) agronomy experts
- Active farmers who are who are educated

Group 3: How will farmers be compensated for their land use and labor? Suggest rates if any.

- There are experiences that farmers contract their land for one or two season in all project sites.

- The landowner can also be working for the project as a daily casual laborer with the usual payment/day for the location. The disadvantage of this method is that it does not enhance local ownership of the research.
- A quarter hectare of land can be rented for 6,000 ETB but varies depending on access to irrigation water.

Group 4: When is the best time to start the on-farm trials?

- October is a good time to start sowing seeds for dry season vegetable production.

4. PROJECT OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES: DISCUSSION POINTS, REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

To capture project main outputs and outcome, the four innovation area teams addressing three questions presented posters:

1. What we intend to do?
2. What has been done?
3. Who was involved?

The participants organized into four groups (three in Amharic and one in English language that included the virtual participants) visited the four innovation areas posters and made their additions using post-it notes. The main points discussed and raised in the four innovation areas are highlighted below:

SEED SYSTEMS

Based on the above theme of presentation, Yidnekachew explained detailed year one activities that had been conducted.

- Vegetable crops and varieties were selected for the woredas
- Seed inventory was conducted
- Seed acquired from different sources (from Melkassa Agricultural Research Centre(MARC) tomato, onion, pepper; from the gene-bank of WorldVeg in Tanzania: Ethiopian Mustard).
- Seeds acquired have been distributed to all demonstration sites and learning plots that were established
- Engagement with seed actors
- Training for seed enterprises

The actors who have been involved in the above activities are:

- Agricultural research centres (MARC and Holeta Agricultural Research Centres/HARC)
- Vegetable farmers (VBN Members)
- Seed traders
- Agro-dealers

- Farmer Service Centre
- Cooperative (Union)
- Woreda Agricultural office

What We Intend To Do?

1. Prioritization of crops & Varieties
2. Vegetable Seed Inventory
 - Formal
 - Informal
3. Seed acquisition & import.
 - National research
 - World Veg germplasm
4. Strengthening private seed sector
 - Establish link & develop action plan with seed sellers & dealers (ISMO)
 - Capacity building for seed enterprises & agrodealers.
5. Crop variety demonstration
6. Analysis & legislations of seed policies

What has been done?

- Crops & Varieties Selected.
- Seed Inventory Conducted.
- Seed acquired from different sources:
 - Melkassa
 - Tanzania
 - Taiwan
- Three Demonstration Sites
- Engagement with Seed Sector
- Training for Seed Enterprises
- Different Components/ aspects of seed policy & regulation examined.

Main stakeholders and their interactions in the Formal Seed System

Private Seed Companies registering Vegetable Varieties

- Joytech PLC
- Girion Life PLC
- Martek PLC
- SYNGENTA PLC
- MEKAMA PLC
- Vilna Seeds Ethiopia PLC
- Rapo Trade
- DAWNT PLC
- IMPACT Ethical Agri PLC
- Syngenta seeds s.v
- Crop grow PLC
- CSMO International Business PLC

National Research Centers Releasing Vegetable Varieties

Vegetable Crop	Agricultural Research Center
Tomato	Melkassa, Mekki, Siririka, Haramaya
Onion/ Shallot	Melkassa, Debrezeit, Holeta, Haramaya University
Hot/Sweet Pepper	Melkassa, Bako
Garlic	Debrezeit, Haramaya University
Cabbage (Brassica oleracea)	Melkassa
Carrot	Haramaya University
Amaranth	Melkassa
Lettuce	Holeta, Mekele

Informal Seed System

Training Cascaded

What's Next?

CBA Group

Festival Use

31 VBN Groups

TOT Provided

Questions raised during the discussion

- Why the participation of Farmer Service Centre in supplying of improved seeds was weak?
- Ejere Woreda farmers purchased and brought green pepper seedlings from Joytech (Bishoftu area) because of pepper germination at Ejere is not good, why? Did V4P&P project confirm that?
- The project focuses on regenerative agriculture but is there any facilitation for a niche market?
- What varieties you does the project promote, OPV or Hybrid? In terms of yield and acceptance of farmers, which one is preferred?
- Did you conduct cost benefit and marginal analysis on demonstration sites and learning plots?
- Have VBN lead farmers started to record their benefits?
- From private seed company which company will work with you and with which crops?
- You trained and established 31 VBN groups and you provided improved seeds for lead farmers for learning plot site so, did you provide those improved seeds also for other group members?

- You brought improved kale seeds from Tanzania to compare with local varieties. If farmers prefer those improved seeds how will you disseminate them to the farmers without adaptation trials at research centres?

Comments and suggestions

- Capacity building on seed production is important because of current issues in seed production.
- Need to identify who participates in organic agriculture and marketing, i.e. private sector and other NGOs. You have to identify actors that buy organic production at a premium price.
- Strengthening the linkage between input supplier and farmers is crucial.

VEGETABLE BUSINESS NETWORKS

What was planned and achieved in year 1:

- 31 farmer groups established, 31 learning sites, 2 demonstration sites
- 31 business coaches participated in training of trainers (ToTs)
- 10 modules developed on good agricultural practices (GAP), 2 modules developed on group formation and business skills
- VBN business coaches trained 774 VBN members
- Seedling raising emerged as a commercial enterprise
- 6 agro-dealers identified as input suppliers
- 43 farmers registering for bio-digesters
- Farmers appreciating the use of regenerative technologies

Who was involved?

- Oromia Region: Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BoANR), Bureau of Finance and Economic Cooperation (BoFEC)
- Woreda offices (BoANR, BoFEC)
- Zonal offices
- Kebele Administration
- Development agents
- Farmers

Questions posed and suggestions made

- Who has the mandate to select vegetable varieties?
- Form VBNs around traders or service providers
- Promote adoption by model farmers and others to follow
- There is a need for a clear coaching plan
- There is a need to be able to share the status of VBN establishment and coaching per woreda with data on gender and ages

- What are the priority crops per woreda related to the outcomes from year 1?
- Who is using regenerative technologies; is it the lead farmer or all VBN members?
- Is there a distinct formation process followed for VBN formation or is it similar to cooperative formation?
- What is the fate of VBN after project? Is there a plan for sustainability?
- Can the project encourage other actors to participate in VBN apart from producers, e.g. traders, large scale producers and input suppliers
- How can the project plan to sustain the service of coaches?
- How do we see adoption of regenerative practices move from learning plots to farmers' fields?

Vegetable Business Network

VBN Formation

Outcomes from Year 1

Year 2 action plan

Who Was Involved?

- Region (BoANK, BoFEC)
- Woreda (BoANK, BoFEC)
- Zone
- Kebele Administration
- Farmers + lead farmers
- DA's

Handwritten notes on sticky papers:

- "Adoption in Market of new products (tomatoes, pumpkins)"
- "VBNs Future Sustainability"
- "Form VBNs around traders or vendors"
- "Variety Selection Mandate"

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Regenerative Vegetable Production thru Vegetable Business Networks

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE: any and all forms of agricultural practice that actively restore soil quality, biodiversity, ecosystems health, water quality while producing sufficient food of high nutritional quality (Grant, 2017)

OBJECTIVE

- Pilot & scale innovative regenerative vegetable production & post-harvest technologies

MODE OF INTERVENTION

- Training (TOT & cascading)
- Learning plots (Lead farmers)
- Demonstration plots (FTC)

PROJECT WOREDAS, #VBNs and PRIORITY VEGETABLES

	# VBNs	Priority Crops
Welmera	11	Kale, Lettuce & Swiss chard
Ejere	6	Kale, Onion, Pepper & Tomato
Woliso	14	Kale, Onion, Tomato & Pepper

REGENERATIVE PRACTICES

- Healthy seedling management
- Soil management
- Water management
- Integrated Pest Management
- Post-harvest handling

TRAINING

- 10 modules (From seedling management to post-harvest handling)
- 2 modules (Business skill & group management)
- Three rounds of training
- 31 business coaches (TOT)
- 775 lead farmers + VBN members (Cascading)

LEARNING PLOT

- 31 learning plots established
- Seed from ARCs & agro-dealers
- Seedling + Field management
- Soil management (vermicompost & bio-slurry)
- IPM (Neem extract & Pesticides)
- 10*10 m plot/ technology
- Continuous learning

DEMONSTRATION

- Two demo plots established at Woliso & Ejere
- Technologies introduced
 - Vegetable varieties
 - Green manure crops
 - Vermicompost
 - Bio-slurry

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Regenerative Agriculture
Planned Activities - Year 1

- Intensive Training on RA practices (TOT (cascading))
- Establishing Demo plots
- piloting RA vegetable production on learning plots
- Developing Research protocols.

Stakeholders

- Regional / Zonal / Woreda agriculture Offices
- Farmers
- Agricultural Research Centers
- Agro-dealers

What was planned and achieved in year 1:

- Intensive training on RA practices: 10 training modules prepared starting from seedling management to post harvest handling and 2 modules in business skill and group formation; three rounds of training of trainers provided to 31 business coaches that was cascaded to 775 lead farmers and other VBN members.
- Establishing demonstration plots: two demo plots established at Woliso and Ejere; vegetables varieties, green manure crops, vermicompost and bio-slurry introduced.
- Piloting RA with vegetables on learning plots: 31 learning plots established; seed secured from Agricultural Research Centres (ARCs) and agro-dealers; seedling growing with appropriate field management

- Continued learning on soil fertility management and IPM.
- Developing research protocols: the different protocols under refinement to implement the research on the ground.

Who was involved?

- Regional/Zonal/Woreda agriculture offices
- Farmers
- Agricultural research centres
- Agro-dealers

MEDIA AND POLICIES

Regarding of media and policy, the status of achievement of planned activities was as follows:

- Create awareness about regenerative agriculture and promotion of integrated pest management: information on V4P&P in general has been disseminated.
- Strengthen vegetable market systems: the Ethiopia seed system policy was reviewed.
- Use of different types of media:
 - o Webpages of WorldVeg and SNV
 - o Social media (WorldVeg Facebook)
 - o Fresh (electronic newsletter)
 - o National news outlets (ENA and Capital)

But more ideas came from participants with detail discussion on the importance. Therefore, the following are some of the media that V4P&P are encouraged to use:

- Using local farm Radio program specially in local language
- Prepare pamphlet and disseminate in local language
- Using EIAR (Ethiopia Institute of Agricultural Research) library to distribute leaflets and other information.
- Open project owned social media (Telegram, Facebook, WhatsApp, IMO etc.)
- Using voice message with Ethiopian Telecommunication on phones
- Using regional Government media (OBN) radio and television
- Record how many people are reached per each media outlet used



5. REFLECTION OF VBN APPROACH: DISCUSSION POINTS, REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

A short video on cassava value chain (<https://www.2scale.org/resources/#banner3>) was presented to illustrate the Agribusiness Cluster Coaching (ABC) approach of ICRA, developed by an initiative called 2Scale. This was followed up with discussion questions: who are the actors you observe in the video, and what similarity and variation do you observe between the video and the VBNs initiated in the project? Then the discussion was complemented with a brief presentation of the ABC approach by the facilitator.

The overall messages and comments generated through the discussion are:

- Most participants suggested that V4P&P could capitalize on the ABC approach, especially the concept of bringing different actors along the value chain to maximize cooperation, synergy and joint learning. Some also suggested that the cassava example has some distinguished features that require tailoring to make it applicable to vegetable business.
- The participants noticed that the ABC approach involves processors but the VBN approach of V4P&P does not involve processors. This suggested that the project needs to broaden its partnership and involve processors to maximize impact.
- The issue of inclusive business and empowering people to support themselves with the resources they are endowed with was a point well taken.
- Technical support and adoption of improved varieties and agronomic packages could improve the productivity of farmers. This in fact needs continuous coaching, mentoring and backstopping from experts and go-ground actors.
- Organizational innovations, networking, joint learning, trust building, coaching and capacity strengthening programs are imperative to enhance the outcome of agribusiness clusters or VBNs.

- The negotiation reached with transporters in cassava video example (formation of farmers-transporters committee) could be a learning avenue for the VBN approach of V4P&P to engage with middlemen.
- Both approaches are long-term focused and give priority to sustainability. They also try to address issues along the value chain following participatory approaches.

On the way forward, the following suggestions and actions points were presented:

- Engaging more actors within the VBNs
- Expanding the farm enterprises, e.g. seedling production business development.
- Networking farmers with traders – selling 1 to 2 weeks before harvesting and preferably one consistent buyer for multiple items.
- Improve skills in regenerative agricultural practices
- Supporting farmers with less volume to aggregate produce to one center and attracting a buyer.
- Strengthen VBNs in a bigger group to get higher volume of vegetables and to get better access to markets
- At present, VBN members are only farmers. However, in principle it should include other actors such as input dealers, traders, transporters, and other service providers.
- Strengthen producers' organizations
- Develop aggregation or collection centers
- Enhance capacity of members and other stakeholders
- Use favorable media outlets

6. REFLECTION ON SEED SYSTEMS FACILITATION: DISCUSSION POINTS, REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Summary of suggestion made in this innovation area:

- Strengthen seed production at the farm level.
- Establish a seed multiplication group.
- Foster linkage between seed suppliers and farmers.
- Strengthen the capacity of local seed suppliers and enable them to be formal.
- Worldveg has hired a consultant to develop a training curriculum on vegetable seed systems. Once the curriculum is ready, it will be open access and our stakeholders can use it to improve the capacity of seed enterprises.
-

7. REFLECTION ON REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE: DISCUSSION POINTS, REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Suggestions in the regenerative agriculture innovation area:

- Making most of the VBN members own a vermicomposting activity through training and facilitating access to worms.
- Piloting and scaling of IPM practices at demonstration and learning plots.
- Piloting easy to adopt post-harvest handling practices like ZECC (zero-energy cooling chamber).
- Piloting drip irrigation and solar pumps at demonstration plots and farmers' fields.
- Making yield and economic comparison between inorganic fertilizer and regenerative soil management practices such as vermicompost and bio-slurry.

8. POLICY ENHANCEMENT: DISCUSSION POINTS, REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Initiatives like using social media, preparing and disseminating pamphlets, Ethiopia seed system policy review had been underlined as achievements. Observed gaps and other possible suggestions made in policy and media enhancement were:

- Consider using call center Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) to get information and try to reach more farmers
- Use radio program in local language
- Awareness creation using radio, telegram, farm radio, and television
- Team up with strong organizations for policy advocacy (e.g. Ethiopian Horticulture Export Association)
- Analyze key challenges in policy and regulations
- Enhance vegetable seed systems
- Policy direction on input importation, licensing, sales and use. This applies to seed, bio-fertilizer, and bio-pesticide.

9. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING: DISCUSSION POINTS, REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Following the presentation of Rosina and clarification questions responses the participants discussed on two main questions proposed: (i) How can we best capture accurate data from farmers – esp. data on vegetable production and sales? (ii) What would be considered a decent job in Ethiopia - within the context of the vegetable business networks? The main discussion points and suggestions proposed are summarized below.



Discussion question-1: How can we best capture accurate data from farmers – especially data on vegetable production and sales?

- It was suggested that the VBN coaches would collect data from vegetable producing farmers using the AkvoFlow application. The collection process is to be closely monitored by the SNV field officers. To this end, the coaches require training on how and when to collect data from member farmers. Most of the data collectors (coaches) will be development agents who have considerable level of practical training in regenerative agricultural technologies. However, some of the participants raised concern about the process of data collection using DAs:
 - *The data collection may overburden the DAs, who are the frontline extension workers who are responsible for cascading different activities of the Bureau of Agriculture. It also requires incentive mechanisms for them to collect data timely and effectively.*
 - *Farmers sell vegetables (especially leafy vegetables) frequently in smaller volume. Only global vegetables (e.g. onion and tomato) are sold once in bulk. This frequent selling of vegetables may require close monitoring and supervision by coaches. The coaches may not have the time and dedication to record and follow-up on such activities. Therefore, the project partners (SNV, WorldVeg and BoA) should devise monitoring mechanisms to improve record keeping and progress tracking.*
- To avoid the inconsistency associated with measurement, there should be a common unit of measurement for most of the vegetable crops, particularly the leafy vegetables. The farmers will express quantities in local measures (e.g. using *chinet*, *isir*, *shekim*) but the coaches should translate

such localized units to standard unit of measurement (preferably kg or quintal). This may require development of conversion factors.

- To improve the accuracy in the data collection, some participants suggested a triangulation and a crosscheck approach. To avoid the possibility of overstating or understating production, the inputs used for production should be recorded such that it can be possible to estimate the level of production from quantities of inputs used. Such recording is also vital to compute productivity, profitability and gross margin analysis.
- The other point of discussion was to synchronize the data collected from VBN farmers with data available in the Bureau of Agriculture (BoA). This will reduce the possible bias and enable to gauge progress against the woreda average. It was also indicated that DAs are known for exaggerating yield and fully relying on their reporting would distort the information. This suggests the requirement of regular monitoring the process and verify the data.

Discussion question-2: What would be considered a **decent job in Ethiopia - within the context of the vegetable business networks?**

- The concept of decent job was subjective and provoked discussion among different members of the panel. The common consensus was there are different actors along the vegetable value chain who support their livelihood. Some of the actors include
 - Market-oriented vegetable producing farmers
 - Local aggregators
 - Middlemen
 - Input suppliers
 - Transporters
 - Traders
 - Retailers
 - Daily laborers facilitating the loading and unloading of vegetables
 - Daily laborers who are engaged in land preparation, weeding, and harvesting vegetables

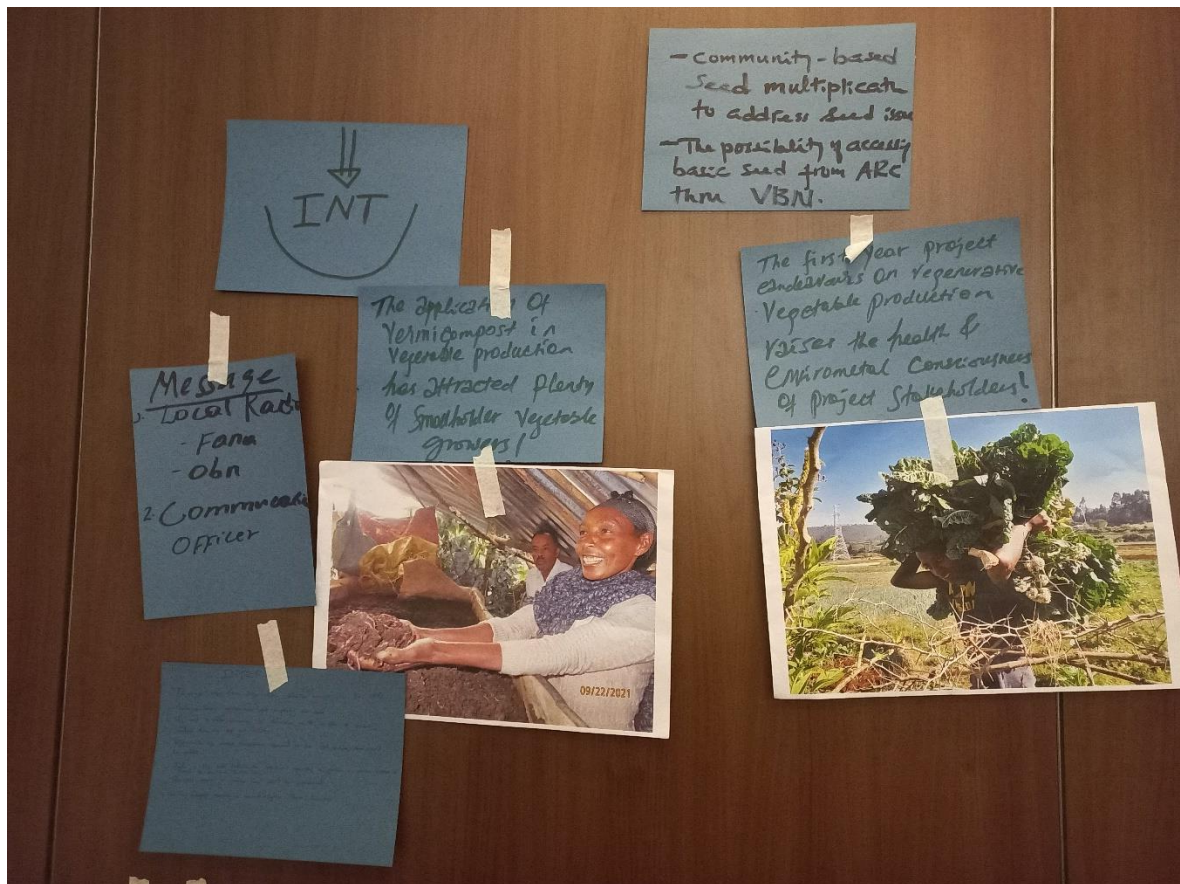
10. CONSOLIDATION OF LESSONS LEARNED AND MESSAGES TO SHARE ON MEDIA

Based on the reflection of the two days, the participants requested to pick the key lessons (i) for internal practice improvement and (ii) to share to the outside world

(i) Lessons picked for internal practice improvement

1. Engage more actors other than farmers groups in the VBN.
2. Challenges expose opportunities for improving our work.
3. We need to create awareness to consumers on the benefit of consuming products that are safe and healthy.
4. Engagement of markets and enterprises interested in the VBN concept should be explored.
5. Radio is the best medium for information to farmers on prices and markets.
6. Consistent training at farmers level is necessary.
7. Training on seedling enterprise is required. In Ejere particularly on pepper and tomato.

8. Disseminate messages through local radio (Fana, OBN) and communication offices at the Woredas.
9. The application of vermicompost in vegetable production has become popular among smallholder vegetable growers.
10. The project endeavors on regenerative vegetable production has raised health and environmental consciousness of project stakeholders
11. Community based seed multiplication can address issues regarding seed availability, quality and affordability.
12. Explore avenues of accessing basic seed from agricultural research centers for seed production by VBNs



13.

(ii) Lessons picked to be shared to the outside world

The following key lesson were picked to be shared to development partners and other stakeholders in the outside world.

1. The use of Bio-slurry as regenerative soil management operation has a tremendous prospect.
2. Understanding the local seed system is essential to address vegetable food challenges.
3. Integrating project team efforts with local government communication efforts using common social media like Telegram will enhance vegetable value chain development.
4. It is possible to produce vegetables using vermicompost and bio-slurry only.
5. Farmers are highly motivated to engage in regenerative agriculture.
6. Many misperceptions about regenerative agriculture exist, indicating strong need for education and learning.
7. Learning workshops enable stakeholders understand each other's perspectives such as challenges and opportunities
8. There is no 'policing' required from value chain facilitators (NGOs), rather providing platforms for actors to negotiate agreements themselves. Facilitators need to maintain neutrality.
9. Local veggies have shorter value chains (local markets) and fewer middlemen than regular veggies.
10. We need to look beyond producer share of price in the value chain and focus more on absolute price/ profit/ return on investments
11. Market Orientation: there is a transition from "selling the surplus" to "producing for market"
12. Development of aggregation centers would help farmers to unite beyond individual production.
13. Only 52 % of VBN members are food secure
14. 37 % mentioned drop in production because of COVID

11. EVENT EVALUATION

The participants asked to evaluate the learning event with three brief questions using the on-line slido.com application. Results are shown below with responses that were mentioned more than once underlined.

i. How do you describe the two days of the workshop in three words?

- Informative
- Interesting
- Learnt achievement
- Eye opener
- Grateful
- Fruitful
- Progress well tracked
- Mesmerizing

- Optimistic
- Successful

Informative and interesting were the most common responses.

ii. What was your favorite session?

- Seed system
- World Café discussion
- Gallery walk
- Group discussion/work
- Result and output

iii. What recommendations would you have for the organizers of this workshop?

- Involve private sector
- Replace projector
- Engage seed importers
- Very good facilitator
- Take lesson and work on it
- Retain all participants
- Keep doing the good work

ANNEX 1: PROGRAM OF THE LEARNING EVENT

Learning Event Tentative Program, Addis Ababa, 13 – 14 October 2021

The purpose of the meeting is an internal reflection on what the project has achieved since its inception, to share learnings among project staff and implementing partners, and incorporate lessons in the way forward. The specific objectives of the meeting are:

1. Share outputs and outcomes of the project
2. Review the four main project innovations: development of vegetable business networks, regenerative agricultural practices, seed and input systems, and policies
3. Learn about the ICRA Agribusiness Cluster approach in relation to the VBN approach
4. Finetune the project implementation strategy where appropriate
5. Send out messages generated from our experiences to the world outside

DAY 1

Tentative timing	Session	Activity	Who	Methodology	Time Allocation	Rapporteur	Virtual participation
1. 8:00 – 9:45	Intro- ductions	Tea and registration			30 mins	Amha Besufkad (Section 1-2)	
		Introductory remarks	Ralph Roothaert		10 mins		Zoom Live
		Introduction of participants		Round – Name/Org/Position	30 mins		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants' expectations • Discussion of program and expected outcomes 	Paulos Desalegn	Slido – Leah Mwaura https://admin.sli.do/event/xvdamczi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you expect from this two day workshop? • What is your priority session or topic during this workshop? • What should be the house rules? 	20 mins 15 mins		
2.	Setting the Scene	Revisit the ToC with focus on:	R. Roothaert	PPT	15 mins	A. Besufkad (Section 1-2)	Zoom Live

9:45 - 10:15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project innovations Enabling Conditions External Drivers <p>Work Programme Year 1</p>						
10:15 – 11:00		Short BREAK						
3. 11:00 – 11:45	Understanding Context	<p>Results of the Participatory Appraisal</p> <p>Value Chain Study</p>	<p>Yidnekachew Zewde</p> <p>Mulugeta - Consultant</p>	PPT and plenary discussion (questions for clarification and what we learn from that/actions to take)	<p>30 mins</p> <p>15 mins</p>	Gemechis Jaleta	Zoom Live	
4. 11:45 – 13:15	Project Innovations Year One	<p>Project outputs and outcomes per Innovation area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seed system analysis Vegetable Business Networks Regenerative Agriculture Media and Policies Baseline – Rosina (10 minute PPT presentation – 5 minute inputs from audience) 	<p>Overall facilitation P. Desalegn Y. Zewde</p> <p>Leah Mwaura</p> <p>A. Besufkad</p> <p>Wubetu Legesse</p> <p>Rosina Wanyama</p>	<p>Posters (with reference to baseline study) and Gallery Walk</p> <p>Lead questions: What did we intend to achieve? What have we achieved? Who was involved? Participants can stick comments and additions on the posters using sticky notes; Presenters 5 minute clarification then additions 10 minute</p>	<p>75 mins</p> <p>15 mins</p> <p>15 mins</p> <p>15 mins</p> <p>15 mins</p> <p>15 mins</p>	<p>Fitsum Biruk</p> <p>Mahlet Yohanes Habtewold Kifelew Nega Mekonnen</p>	English version to be recorded to be posted for the virtual team	
13:15 – 14:00			LUNCH					
5. 14:00 – 15:30	Reflections on year one	<p>Breakthroughs and Challenges</p> <p>Questions:</p>	<p>P. Desalegn</p> <p>Café hosts</p>	World Café 4 tables according to the project innovation	minutes explanation methodology			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we explain most significant changes and observed gaps and? • What obstacles affected the effectiveness of the project in achieving the intended outcomes? • How do we cope with/manage the obstacles and reinforce the desired practices and intended changes? • Who else needs to be involved in the project and how? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed system analysis – Y. Zewde • Vegetable Business Networks – L. Mwaura • Regenerative Agriculture – A. Besufkad • Media and Policies – W. Legesse 		<p>20 minute per table round discussion</p> <p><u>Café hosts</u> Organizing the table – hosts – write the questions two category (first two and the remaining two) – two flip charts) in a wall/ stand with comfortable table – café setup</p>	<p>Shemelis Akililu</p> <p>Getachew Tabor</p> <p>Ousman Yimer</p> <p>Amenu Olani</p>		
15:30 – 16:00			BREAK					
6. 16:00 - 17:00	Introduction to the Agribusiness Cluster Coaching Approach	<p>Key pillars of the iCRA ABC coaching approach.</p> <p>VBN and ABC additions/comparison reflection</p>	P. Desalegn	<p>Video + discussion PPT (slides) Discussion https://www.2scale.org/resources/#banner3</p> <p>Who are the actors you observe in the video? What similarity and variation you observe in the two approach?</p>	<p>40 mins</p> <p>10 mins</p> <p>10 mins</p>	Y. Zewde	To be recorded and shared & Zoom Live	
Close Day 1.								

DAY 2

Tentative timing	Session	Activity	Who	Methodology	Time Allocation	Rapporteur	Virtual participation
7. 8:30 – 9:45	Harves-ting Lessons –	Results of the World Café Session	Table Hosts P. Desalegn	Flip chart (or PPT)	10 mins each table host of major points	L. Mwaura	Zoom Live
		Capturing the major lessons	P. Desalegn and R. Roothaert	Pick on cards across the innovation	Plenary discussion 20 mins 15 mins		
8. 9:45 – 10:45 -	Way forward on the VBN facilitation	Plenary Discussion and Reflection Questions – R. Roothaert note	P. Desalegn & L. Mwaura	Plenary Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does ABC approach compare with VBN approach? • Are there things we can do to improve on VBN approach? • How do we actualize or implement VBN facilitation in year 2 (and 3)? 	60 mins	W. Legesse	Zoom Live
10:45 – 11:15			BREAK				
9. 11:15 – 11:45 -	Research protocols	On-farm and on-station Experimentation (one example)		PPT and discussion – Paola and Ralph https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1J1UYRsXPHzIQY3phlpgwDNY61VFZAL9-	30 mins	W. Legesse	Zoom Live
10. 11:45 – 12:30 -	Monitoring, Evaluation on Learning	Reviewing data collection for KPIs	R. Wanyama, Y. Zewde	PPT and discussion -	30 mins	Y. Zewde	Zoom Live
12:30 - 14:00			LUNCH				

11. 14:00 – 15:30 -	Way Forward	Parallel Working Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed Systems • Regenerative Agriculture • Policy Enhancement • Key Messages Presentation of Group Work in Plenary and Discussion			40 mins group work 10 mins Per group 10 mins overall reflection	A. Besufkad	
15:30 - 16:00		BREAK					
12. 16:00 - 16:45 -	Consolidation of lessons learned	Recap of Lessons learned and key messages Reflection on Theory of Change	P. Desalegn + R. Wanyama, R. Roothaert	5 lessons to be picked for twitter – SNV communication team and Paulos	25 mins 20 mins	P. Desalegn	To be recorded and shared
13. 16:45 – 17:15	Closure	Quick and dirty evaluation Wrap-up Closure	P/ Desalegn R. Roothaert	Slido – L. Mwaura	30 mins	P. Desalegn	

ANNEX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

N o.	Organization	Name	Position	Title	email address	Mob/tel number	Address	Country	Physical/v irtual
1	WorldVeg ESA	Amha Besufkad	Agronomist		amha.besufkad@worldveg.org		Addis Ababa	Ethiopia	physical
2	WorldVeg ESA	Yidnekachew Zewde	Socio-economist		yidnekachew.zewde@worldveg.org		Addis Ababa	Ethiopia	physical
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4	WorldVeg ESA	Wubetu Bihon	Liaison Officer	Dr.	wubetu.legesse@worldveg.org		Addis Ababa	Ethiopia	physical
5	WorldVeg ESA	Ralph Roothaert	PI and Kenya country director	Dr.	ralph.roothaert@worldveg.org		Kenya	Kenya	physical
6	WorldVeg ESA	Habtewold Kifelew	Researcher - Crop Protecton	Mr	habtewold.kifelew@worldveg.org		Addis Ababa	Ethiopia	physical
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13	SNV	Meseret Kebede	Communication	Mrs	kmeseret@snv.org		Addis Ababa	Ethiopia	physical
14	SNV	Alemayehu Asrat	Field officer	Mr	aasrat@snv.org		Wolmera		Physical
15	SNV	Fitsum Biruk	Field officer	Mr	fbiruk@snv.org		Woliso		Physical
16	SNV	Shimelis Haliu	Field officer	Mr	shailu2@snv.org		Ejere		Physical
17	EIAR Melkassa R C.	Dr Shimelis Aklilu	Horticulture Research team leader	Dr.					
18	EIAR D/zeit	Dr Getachew Tabor	Researcher - vegetabl	Dr.					

N o.	Organization	Name	Position	Title	email address	Mob/tel number	Address	Country	Physical/v irtual
19	Head of Woliso woreda BoA	Deneke Megerssa	Office head	Mr	denekemeersa4@gmail.com	913297018	Wolisso-wereda	Ethiopia	physical
20	Head of Wolmera woreda BoA	Gedefa Dibaba	Office head	Mr		0911085516/0923627766	Wolmera-wereda	Ethiopia	physical
21	Head of Ejere woreda BoA	Gurmessa Bitima	Office head	Mr		912047341	Ejere Woreda	Ethiopia	physical
22	Horticulture Expert - Wolisso woreda	Tadessa Terefa	Horticulture expert	Mr	tadeseterefe8@gmail.com	912161291	Woliso Woreda	Ethiopia	physical
23	Horticulture Expert - Wolmera woreda	Shumet Embale	Horticulture expert	Mr		916890890	Wolmera Woreda	Ethiopia	physical
24	Horticulture Expert - Ejere woreda	Buzuayehu Tafa	Horticulture expert	Mr		942366258	Ejere wareda	Ethiopia	physical
25	VBN lead farmer- Woliso Woreda	Chala Workina	lead farmer & business coach	Mr		963289993	Woliso Woreda	Ethiopia	Physical
26	VBN lead farmer - Ejere Woreda	Dagefa Bedada	lead farmer & business coach	Mr		911999526	Ejere wareda	Ethiopia	Physical
27	VBN lead farmer - Wolmera Woreda	Hurume Edecha	lead farmer & business coach	Mrs		965834959	Welmera	Ethiopia	Physical
28	Farm Radio International	Zelalem Nega	Country Representative	Mr	znega@farmradio.org	2.51912E+11	Addis Ababa	Ethiopia	physical
29	Ethio-Netehrlands seed system	Mohammed Hassana		Dr	-	0911184530	Addis Ababa	Ethiopia	physical
30	SNV	Leah Muaura	PM		-		Kenya	Kenya	physical
31	Holeta Agri research center	Ousman Yimer	Horticulture researcher & dept head	Mr	ousmna24@gmail.com	913620817	Holeta	Ethiopia	physical
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33	Yarashu PLC (Market actor)	Melat	GM		melat.t.legesse@gmail.com		Addis Ababa	Ethiopia	physical

N o.	Organization	Name	Position	Title	email address	Mob/tel number	Address	Country	Physical/v irtual
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4	WorldVeg Asia	Paola Sotelo	Entomologist	Dr.	paola.sotelo@worldveg.org			Taiwan	virtual
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ANNEX 3: LINK TO GOOGLE DRIVE WORKSHOP MATERIAL AND RECORDINGS

- https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VYjtOnD4-sMVoMWaNEnfemk6EyE_uBuZ?usp=sharing