



Annual Narrative Report for Year 2
of the Proli-FaNS project
(August 2017–July 2018)

by Beza Kifle, Prolinnova–Ethiopia coordinator

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1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION HOW THE REPORT WAS PREPARED

The report is prepared by the new project coordinator Ms Beza Kifle Haile with the help of the former Country Platform (CP) coordinator Hailu Araya, who provided the information for the first three quarters of the project year. Beza joined Best Practice Association (BPA) in the fourth quarter of the project year.

The sources of information used to prepare the report are quarterly reports, back-to-office report and the documents stored in this phase of the project.

2. CHANGES IN PROJECT CONTEXT DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

In the two action-learning sites, no changes have occurred in the political, economic and social settings that affect the project.

The significant positive change that has come about is that the farmers (innovators) have been involved in different trainings and obtained knowledge during the experience-sharing visit. This will help the farmers to investigate more on their innovations and to improve their innovation by adopting new ideas.

With regard to project management, a significant change did occur: The previous coordinator for Prolinnova–Ethiopia, who was also the director of the organisation hosting Prolinnova–Ethiopia (BPA), resigned from both positions. He was replaced by the new BPA Acting Director, Yosef Garede, and the new Prolinnova–Ethiopia coordinator, Ms Beza Kifle, who joined BPA in the fourth quarter of the second year of the Proli-FaNS project. Hailu Araya is still committed to assist the initiative voluntarily.

3. IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT AND ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVES

3.1 To what extent are the project objectives being achieved?

Objective 1: Rural communities develop their innovative capacities to effectively improve food security, nutrition security and nutritional diversity.

To achieve this project objective, several meetings and trainings were carried out:

Training in M&E: Ten farmers and agricultural experts took part in training in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for local communities from the two action-learning sites: from the Axum area four participants (1F) and from Enebse Sar Midir (ESM) six participants. There were also three participants (including one woman) from Addis Ababa: the trainer and training facilitators. The training was held on 15–16 October 2017 in the Panorama Hotel in Addis Ababa.

Consultative meeting with media partners: On 24–25 August 2017 in Mekelle, Tigray Region, a consultative meeting was held with media people to update them about promoting local innovation and the Proli-FaNS project so that they include this in their field observations. There were 26 participants: 9 journalists (3F), one farmer presenter (M), 12 researchers and academicians (2F) and 4 participants from private documentation organisations.

In the Axum area, the Proli-FaNS project is improving food security, nutrition security and nutritional diversity in the following ways:

- M&E and familiarisation visits: Hailu Araya visited the Axum site on 28 November–2 December 2017 for M&E; the new CP coordinator visited Axum on 5–7 June 2018 for mutual introductions with the farmers and the site coordinator and to visit the farmers’ innovations together with Hailu;
- SRC visit: To improve the implementation capacity of the project team and the governance of Prolinnova–Ethiopia (PE), Amanuel Assefa, the subregional coordinator (SRC) for Eastern & Southern Africa, visited Axum on 29 September–2 October 2017 together with Hailu.
- Participatory Innovation Development (PID): Four farmer-led experiments are underway in the Axum site, involving 14 participants all together.

S.N.	Category	Female	Male	Total
1	Farmers	2	6	8
2	Axum University and Research	0	2	2
3	Agriculture Office	1	2	3
4	Prolinnova/BPA	0	1	1
	Total	3	11	14

The experiments are on:

1. Integration of *gesho* (hops) as multipurpose tree
 2. Intercropping of cereals, legume, vegetables and/or spices
 3. Crop and plant protection
 4. Income generation through determining sex of chicken eggs.
- Identification of baobab tree as existing resource for new purposes: during field investigations on 17–19 October and training on 20–21 October 2017 in the Axum area in northwestern Tigray, baobab was found in 11 villages and was identified by innovator farmers and local administration as an ample resource but not used by the local people for food. Yet elsewhere in Tigray Region – specifically in Shire Endesilase – the local people use the powder of the tree leaves as a food additive to improve their health. The idea is to share the local practice from Shire Endesilase to other areas in Tigray Region.

In ESM, Proli-FaNS is improving food security, nutrition security and nutritional diversity in the following ways:

- Experience-sharing visit: On 8–14 December 2017, eight farmers from ESM (including 3 women) visited 10 farmers at the Axum learning site to learn from their experiences in local innovation and farmer-led experimentation.
- The new CP coordinator visited the ESM site on her own on 11–14 June 2018; the farmers discussed the status of their innovations with her.
- Three Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) were established in three *kebeles*¹ (010, 018 and 022) to enhance the engagement of stakeholders, including farmers, in promoting farmer innovation; this took place at a meeting involving staff from the ESM District Agricultural Office, ESM District Communication Office, Mertulemariam TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) College and Mertulemariam Agricultural College on 8 July 2018.

¹*Kebele*: ward, neighbourhood, group of hamlets; smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia.

Kebele No.	Members	Male	Female
022	17	13	4
018	25	19	6
010	14	6	8
Total	56	38	18

- Capacity building in innovation, food and nutrition security and training on PID as an accepted approach to attain food and nutrition security within Ethiopia was given on 17–19 June 2018 by Atalay Yigrem, the ESM site coordinator and General Manager of the Alem Birhan community-based organisation. The participants were:
 - FFS members from three *kebeles*: 9 (3F) members (3 members from each FFS)
 - innovative farmers from 15 rural *kebeles*: 30 (15F) farmers
 - Alem Birhan staff members: 5 (2 F).
 Thus, a total of 44 (20F) participants were able to attend the training.

The PID cases in ESM are planned to be implemented in Year 3.

Objective 2: Women are more widely recognised as innovators and are supported in further developing their innovations, from which they control the benefits.

- A field visit was made by Amanuel Assefa and Hailu Araya on 29 September–2 October 2017 to a women innovator Ms Haregu Gobezai in Rama, Tigray Region. The innovation of this woman is running a commercial orchard on about 12 ha with a modern irrigation facility that runs across the farmland. She has over 6000 well-managed apple-mango trees and more than 500 orange trees. She is also running a very innovative activity that she calls a “soil bank”. The place where she is cultivating the orchard is a bit stony and she wanted to harvest the alluvial soil from the running river on the bank of her farm. She identified a strategic location to build a soil conservation structure using a gabion. Finally, she managed to get tons of alluvial soil from the running water during the wet season and started to distribute it in the orchard.
- The CP supported women innovators who are interested in keeping poultry and planting *gesho* (for preparing local drinks) and *shibaka*. Both plants are multipurpose and are planted on farm boundaries and in backyards. *Shibaka* is a source of animal feed and can also be used to fence in the homesteads. In Mai Tsa’eda (near Axum), a village visited by Amanuel and Hailu on 29 September–2 October 2017 to see where these activities are taking place, the lead farmer facilitator is Ms Berha Tadesse.
- Training in farmer-led experimentation for female-headed families in the Axum learning site was given by Hailu to 16 participants, including 3 men: an expert from the District Agriculture Office, a researcher from Aksum University and one man who attended the training because his mother was sick and he came in her place.
- In the Axum learning site, six of the local innovations identified were developed by women farmers and women were involved in seven other local innovations that were identified in the site (these innovations were by husband and wife).
- The 20 local innovations identified in the Axum site were:

No.	Local innovation	Sex of innovators
1	Postharvest handling of tomato	F
2	Intercropping	F/M
3	Making marmalade and juice from fruits	F
4	Sex determination of chicken by egg shape	F/M
5	Using neem for pest control	M
6	Planting <i>shibaka</i> ²	M
7	Preparing <i>hanza</i> ² from different cereals	F
8	Preparing <i>burkuta</i> ²	M
9	Using plant tea for pest control	M
10	Using plant tea as manure	M
11	Chicken hatching by local chicken breed	F/M
12	Chicken breed selection	F/M
13	Comparing different chicken feeds for egg production	F/M
14	Preparing vermicompost	F/M
15	Making three-in-one cooking pot	F
16	Improving meat and milk production (crossbreeding)	F/M
17	Preparing nutritious food	F
18	Making <i>hilbet</i> ² from faba bean	F
19	Controlling fall armyworm	M
20	Comparing different ways of managing pests and diseases	M

- In the ESM learning site, the involvement of women is also high in a total of eight innovations by mixed-gender groups in the three *kebeles*:

No.	Local innovation	Sex of innovators
1	Controlling <i>boleke</i> disease by using botanicals	Mixed group
2	Preparing dry pumpkin and tomato to extend the shelf life	F
3	Control of <i>jibe</i> , a disease affecting chickpea	Mixed group
4	Controlling rats by using botanicals	Mixed group
5	Controlling weevil (local name: <i>neqez</i>)	Mixed group
6	Intercropping and mixed cropping	M
7	Planting different vegetables in fertile soil in a sack	Mixed group
8	Preparing diesel from weed (<i>Mete Arem</i>)	M
9	Local soap production for health and income generation	F
10	Making wheat and teff row planter from locally available plastic (sowing in line by using plastic bottles)	M
11	Controlling disease known as <i>alekit</i> that affects and kills farm animals	Mixed group
12	Curing chicken disease	Mixed group
13	Curing sheep <i>gunfan</i> (cold)	M
14	Ploughing with one ox	M
15	Modified beehive and beekeeping practices	M
16	Improving soil fertility by using silt soil from rivers and gullies	M
17	Improving productivity through enhancing soil fertility by planting <i>geregerita</i> tree on terraces	M
18	Planting <i>gesho</i> and other multipurpose trees and vegetables on terraces	Mixed Group
19	Preparing local beer from beetroot	F
20	Changing traditional fences by planting moringa, <i>shibaka</i> , animal feed etc instead of thorny shrubs/trees	M

²*Shibaka, hanza, burkuta* and *hilbet* are traditional food dishes.

In these groups, 18 women are actively participating and three of the innovations were developed by women:

- Preparing dry pumpkin and tomato to extend the shelf life
- Local soap production for health and income generation
- Preparing local beer from beetroot.

Objective 3: Sub-regional Prolinnova platforms support national CPs to develop capacity for collective learning, mobilising resources and effective policy dialogue.

The SRC Amanuel Assefa supported the CP by taking part in the following meetings.

The PE National Steering Committee (NSC) and Technical Advisory Group (TAG) met jointly on 21 June 2017 in the BPA office in Addis Ababa to discuss the following points:

1. Update on the Proli-FaNS project
2. Briefing on ESAPP (Eastern and Southern Africa Prolinnova Platform)
3. Decisions required
 - 3.1 To hold a retreat on the future of the PE network:
 - To review the history of PE
 - To develop strategies for the future of PE
 - To discuss documents on the governance system of the Prolinnova network
 - 3.2 How can we conduct M&E with the small budget?

After discussing, we agreed to prepare a training meeting in Addis Ababa for participants from the learning sites and then they will implement the training at their sites. This will reduce the costs for M&E. The M&E template will be reduced into a simple format that can be understood and handled by the local partners. The retreat has not yet been held.

The NSC and TAG met jointly on 13 June 2018 in the Panorama Hotel in Addis Ababa to discuss the following agenda points:

1. Introduction of the new PE coordinator
2. Short update from BPA
3. International Partners Workshop (IPW) update
4. Action plan
5. General update.

In summary regarding the achievement of project objectives, a total of 40 local innovations were documented: 20 in the Axum area and 20 in ESM. Thus, this target for the end of Year 2 was achieved. It was agreed with the farmers that materials such as seedlings, containers and different inputs will be supplied by PE to the project site coordinators, who will provide them to the farmers to help them investigate some of their innovations more deeply.

Completion of the targeted PID processes in the two action-learning sites was not achieved in Year 2 because the former project coordinator was busy with other tasks and the delay of transfer of funds also affected project implementation, but the targeted PID processes are planned to be completed in Year 3. To fill the gaps in implementing the Proli-FaNS project, all the NSC members divided tasks among themselves, and the site coordinators will take part in the quarterly meetings with the NSC, TAG and the project coordinator in order to facilitate the follow-up process.

PE is benefitting from being a part of a subregional Prolinnova platform. The SRC helps PE in different ways by participating in the meetings of the NSC and giving important suggestions and also supporting the project in other ways.

3.2 Current status of implementation of activities and generation of outputs

Key activities implemented were:

- Documentation of total of 40 local innovations in the two learning sites
- Three FFSs were established in ESM, with the objective of enhancing the engagement of stakeholders, including farmers, in promoting farmer innovation.
- Providing *gesho* seedlings to 27 male and 11 female farmers in the ESM learning site.

The output that the project generated so far is that the farmers in both learning sites are doing more investigations on their innovations and showing changes in their lives in different ways.

The innovator farmers are profiting from their innovation: they are solving their problems on their own and increasing their production and also gaining economic benefits.

The farmer innovators are conducting their experiments keenly because the innovations they are investigating are making a great difference in their lives. Neighbours of the innovators are also trying out the local innovations and improving their lives.

3.3 Unintended effects

In Year 2, no unintended effects of the project activities took place.

3.4 Risks and/or unexpected opportunities

So far, no risks or unexpected opportunities were observed.

3.5 Project evaluation (not compulsory to all)

In the second year of the project, James Japiong from ACDEP made a financial backstopping visit to PE on 24–28 July 2018.

4. CONCLUSION

In each of the two action-learning sites where the Proli-FaNS project is being carried out in Ethiopia, the targeted number of local innovations was identified and documented.

The farmers learned thus far to investigate their innovations more deeply and to share them with other farmers in different ways and to become even more motivated to undertake still further innovation. They are eager to conduct other experiments when they see the effectiveness of their initial innovation.

BPA learned during Year 2 how to become better at conducting the project activities in time according to the work plan. Continuous follow-up and contact with the learning-site coordinators and also with the NSC and TAG will be necessary to discuss the status of the project and to prepare the required reports in time.

To improve implementation of project activities in the future, the NSC agreed to divide tasks among its members and to hold quarterly meetings with the site coordinators to follow up on the project activities so that the project objectives can be achieved by the end of Year 3.