



## **IDR-BASIS Workshop**

### **Formation of Zone Research and Development Liaison Committee**

#### **BASIS CRSP**

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## **RAPPORT**

The Institute of Development Research, Addis Ababa University organized a one-day workshop on March 7, 2002 in Dessie, South Wollo. It was attended by people from the Institute of Development Research, administrative and technical staff from South Wollo and Oromia zones, and an NGO known as CONCERN that operates actively in South Wollo zone. The workshop was based on the decisions of the 1997 Regional Planning Workshop. In the part of the plan document dealing with Operation and Implementation it is stated that BASIS would have links with institutions at the zonal, regional and national and international levels. It is indicated in the plan that BASIS operation in Ethiopia and in the region involves linkages with development organizations and policy makers, workshops and training. It is also pointed out in the plan that the research program must maintain important dialogue links at all levels of government and institutions in Ethiopia. It is noted in the plan that a zone research and development liaison committee will be set up to identify the nature of collaborations.

The workshop was opened by a brief introduction by Ato Yigremew Adal on the general background of BASIS-Ethiopia, objectives of the workshop and the workshop program. This was followed by a brief status report of BASIS project –Ethiopia by the Director of the Institute of Development Research, Dr. Workneh Negatu. Copies of his report were distributed to participants (see the annex). The report includes general background, the research framework of BASIS, the different research and other activities and outcomes of the project. This was followed by a discussion on the need for the establishment, objectives, duties, membership, leadership, mode of operation of the Liaison Committee.

It was indicated in the discussion that the Committee is necessary to coordinate the activities of different stakeholders towards the achievement of the goals of the project. It was mentioned that the committee would identify institutions working on similar issues, does inventory of ongoing research projects in the zones, identifying research gaps and setting priorities, examining the relevance and practicability of research outcomes, documentation and collection of relevant policies and directives and other documents, planning and organization of meetings and workshops, and similar activities. Participants regretfully noted that in general and in the past there was no feedback from those study projects carried out in the zones or region to the concerned zone offices and bodies. The participants highly appreciated the idea of consultation and participation sought by the BASIS project from zone and region offices and other partners. It was indicated in the workshop that the general experience in the past is that bodies or coordinating committees formed (e.g. a committee for SIDA-sponsored program) focused on soliciting administrative and facilitative services. After long discussion a consensus was reached that the committee is very important and useful for an effective achievement of the objectives of BASIS and other research projects in the zones. It would also contribute towards meeting the development objectives and goals both zones in particular and the Amhara region in general.

Participants expressed their concern that experience shows that many of the committees established in the past were not effectively functional. They suggested that such a body requires at least one employed staff and a place/office to do its work effectively. The Chairman explained that BASIS will finance activities of the Committee but employment of staff and other kind of commitments have to be discussed with the external principal partners and investigators of the project, differing specific decision.

The number and composition of members of the Committee were also thoroughly discussed. The need to include professionals rather than administrators was very much emphasized. It was then decided that the Committee should have seven members composed of two persons representing zone administration of each zone, two persons from the Rural Development departments, one from each zone, one representative from Dessie-Zuria woreda, (one of the project woreda of BASIS) one person from the NGO CONCERN, and one member from IDR. It was then pointed out that each institution or department selected for the committee would designate individual members of the Committee and communicate the same officially. The meeting decided on the leadership of the Committee: South Wollo Zone Administration - Chair, Oromia Rural Development Department – Vice Chair, and IDR –secretary.

The meeting discussed and agreed upon that the Committee shall assume its official status and start working as soon as possible. As to the regular meetings of the Committee, issues of workload of members, the travel distance, and cost implications were raised and discussed. A consensus was then reached that the Committee should convene its regular meetings every four months (i.e. three times per year).

Discussion continued in the afternoon on the mode of operation and activities of the Liaison committee to be carried out during the period of the remaining two years life of the BASIS project. The four major activities envisaged by the Liaison Committee are: documentation of zone and regional policies and directives; inventorying research projects and their activities in the zones; inventorying development projects and their activities in the zones, and; organizing seminars and workshops to discuss research and development issues and gaps, research outcomes and policy implications and recommendations. For the first four months, the committee assigned itself the task of gathering and documenting all relevant official policies and directives issued by federal, regional or zone policy/government offices on different aspects of development, particularly those related with food security and factor markets. The zone offices from which the documents are to be collected include:

- Office of Agriculture
- Office of Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission
- Office of Water, Minerals and Energy
- Office of Trade and Industry
- Office of Finance
- Office of Cooperative Promotion
- Office of Food security Unit
- Office of Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Rehabilitation in Amhara (SAERA)
- Office of Economic Division/Administration
- Office of Micro-Finance/National Bank
- Office of Labor and Social Affairs

## Participants of the IDR- BASIS Workshop, Dessie

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