

## **ILSSI: Description of the process of consent of farmer participation**

The selection of target farm households in ILSSI intervention field sites was done through a multi-stage stakeholder engagement process.

**Stage 1 is consultation with district level experts and officials** of the relevant ministries. At this stage, meetings are held to explain the objectives of the project under Feed the Future, the activities to date to prepare for field level interventions, the site selection process, the various high potential technologies that could be piloted, and the targeted number of households. We also consult with them on the target household selection process, providing proposed criteria, and who we believe should be involved in the selection process (kebele leaders, kebele level extension staff and community representative). For this process, we also discuss the financing mechanisms for the technologies to ensure it is appropriate for the context. Finally, we explain the data needs, data collection process and monitoring process. Through this process, we reach consensus that every proposed target household must participate in the program based strictly on her/his consent and full willingness. Finally, at this stage, we ensure that the proposed technologies aligned with the respective districts development agendas and priorities. Agreement is reached before moving to the next stage. One focal person from each district agriculture office is assigned as a contact person and representative of the respective agriculture office.

**Stage 2 involves the engagement of community leaders and representatives, and sub-district extension staff.** In this stage, a team made up of IWMI, ILRI, the local partner university (in Ethiopia, Bahir Dar University; in Ghana, University for Development Studies) and the sub-district focal person visit the respective communities where the pilots will be implemented. The team meets with the sub-district ministry representatives and representatives/local authorities/chair persons of the community. The team briefs them on the objectives of the project and purpose of the visit, and request that they organize a meeting with the local council, community representative and extension staff to discuss the objectives of the project and process of potential target household selection. We ensure sufficient time for them to organize such meetings with adequate representation from the community.

**Stage 3 is the community meeting for sharing project information**, at which the team provides the opportunity for discussion, questions and clarification. For example, in Ethiopia, questions raised during the October 2014 meetings were about limiting the study to only one watershed in the area, the sufficiency of water in the wells for dry season irrigation, replacement of the technologies in the case of breakdown, availability of maintenance and spare part service, cost of the technology, concern of discontinuity/dis-adoption, and start dates. After clarifications, the community leaders/representatives, extension staff and the district focal person propose target farm households.

The **main criteria used to select the target households** include:

- 1) Willingness of the proposed target household to participate,
- 2) Access to water source (private wells),

- 3) Willingness to allocate a demonstration plot of 250 m<sup>2</sup> and 1000 m<sup>2</sup> for those who will participate in demonstrating irrigated vegetables and irrigated fodder, respectively,
- 4) Willingness to produce a crop agreed by the group of selected target households,
- 5) Willingness to use the same type and amount of fertilizer and seed for the demonstration crop,
- 6) Willingness to sign a credit contract and payback the loan to a third party (savings and credit organization at district level with preferential rates agreed with district government),
- 7) Willingness to keep records of all costs and activities related to demonstration plot,
- 8) Willingness to use the demonstration plot for field training/demonstration,
- 9) Agreement not to plant chat in the demonstration plot (Ethiopia),
- 10) Willingness to allocate among target households with gender balance; aim for 50%.

**Stage 4 is a meeting and consultation with proposed target households.** This final stage of the engagement process provides time for farmers to decide for themselves and provide evidence of their willingness to participate, or to not participate. As part of the engagement process, the research team explains to the proposed target households the specific objectives of the project, criteria for selecting households to participate, and the expectations for those that participate. The team then asks who is willing to participate, stressing that whatever decision they make is positively appreciated and there are no implications if they choose not to participate. In the case of Ethiopia, two female farmers decided not to participate in the program, and the team appreciated their decision. Furthermore, for those who agree to participate, the team stresses that they can still decide not to participate at any time before they purchase the technology. Therefore, participation is entirely voluntary and all participants provide their consent based on information about the research objectives, process, and requirements.

#### **Protecting identity of target households**

The identity of farmers and households will not be made public or included in the data sets. Data to be collected in the study is primarily biophysical and economic related to the interventions. IWMI will ensure that any identifiable private information is removed from all data and documents, including those under the partnership agreement with Bahir Dar University.

#### **Minimal risk**

The research interventions will support willing participants to install and apply new technologies related to small scale irrigation to produce crops agreed upon by the community as a group. Participants receive on-going training under the project on the new technologies and agronomic practices. In addition, the research team attempts to ensure that spare parts are available and that local people are trained to repair equipment. In addition, the research team engages with the local savings and credit organization or cooperative to train them on basic economic issues related to the technologies, and to ensure fair interest and flexible repayment appropriate for the technology packages. Therefore, the team attempts to reduce probability of risk to participants beyond that encountered through daily or routine life as smallholder farmers.