SOIL PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION FOR FOOD SECURITY IN ETHIOPIA
IASS ACCOMPANYING RESEARCH ON ISFM’ ROLL-OUT IN AMHARA REGION

Under its special initiative “One World, No Hunger” (SEWOH), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is prioritizing efforts to deliver food security and enhance the management of natural resources. The protection and rehabilitation of agricultural land managed by smallholder farmers are central to this dual agenda and form the objectives of a GIZ programme implemented in five countries. Seeking to explore new forms of development cooperation, SEWOH mandated the Global Soil Forum (GSF) to accompany the work of the GIZ through transdisciplinary research. The accompanying research project focuses on the socio-economic and cultural factors that constrain the uptake of sustainable land management (SLM) techniques by smallholder farmers. The GSF’s approach stresses co-development and the pursuit of research themes with local partners, including researchers, policymakers, actors of development cooperation, civil society organisations, and farmers.

1. Rationale and Objective

Understanding Adoption of ISFM+ Packages in Context @ Micro Watersheds (MWs) level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social space</th>
<th>Technical space</th>
<th>Political space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land use arrangements</td>
<td>Improved soil fertility</td>
<td>Land tenure policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor availability &amp; mobilization</td>
<td>Selection of experimental plot</td>
<td>Market information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social compatibility</td>
<td>Increase in wheat yield</td>
<td>Extension services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profitability</td>
<td>Increase in Teff yield</td>
<td>Overall rural transformation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Approach, Process and Method

- Synthesis and way forward
  - Identify technologies that can be scaled up
  - Spill-over effect of technologies beyond beneficiaries and MWs
  - Sustainability outlook

- Reflect and analyze
  - Acceptability and appropriateness of ISFM technologies
  - Implications for the circumstances and priorities of resource poor farmers

3. Understanding the Context and Anchoring

1960s – 1970s:
- Practiced intercropping and crop rotation (Faba bean, Teff, Barley, Linseed and Pea)
- Introduction of artificial fertilizer (only for few land owners)
- Dense forest of local species

1980s – 1990s:
- Introduction of the first wheat variety (locally termed Encoye)
- High deforestation caused by return from settlement
- Increased soil erosion

1990s – 2000s:
- High rain fall variability and land slides
- Introduction of insecticides
- Crop rotation practice reached its minimum
- High Mono-cropping of Wheat
- Increase in soil acidity/less fertile
- Increased use of physical and biological soil and water conservation (SWC) measures

4. Emerging Lessons

- Farmers are heterogeneous: appropriate categories of farmers need to be addressed
- Farmers own different land units with various soil fertility status scattered within the MW
- Land fragmentation could influence both adoption of ISFM technologies and future rural transformation
- Explore the possibility of piloting Voluntary Land Consolidation (VLC) in selected ISFM micro watersheds
- ISFM delivery mechanisms should go beyond Model Farmers (MFs) and Farmers Field Days (FFD) Approach
- Co-design socially sensitive approaches such as “Trust-based Twining (TBT) with MFs”