

Agri Service Ethiopia (ASE)



Strategic Plan (2015-2019)

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ACRONYMS

| | |
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| ASE | Agri Service Ethiopia |
| BoM | Board of Management |
| CBI | Community Based Institution |
| CBRM | Community Based Risk Management |
| CoLF | Community Learning Forum |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| DRM | Disaster Reduction and Management |
| FFS | Farmers' Filed School |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| GA | General Assembly |
| GO | Government Organization |
| GTP | Growth and Transformation Plan |
| HDI | Human Development Index |
| HHs | Households |
| HIV/AIDS | HIV/AIDS Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| HO | Head Office |
| HRD | Human Resource Development |
| HTPs | Harmful Traditional Practices |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MoFED | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development |
| NAPA | National Adaptation Program of Action |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NRM | Natural Resource Management |
| PID | Participatory Innovation Development |
| PLWHA | People Living With HIV/AIDS |
| POs | Program Offices |
| SLOT | Strength, Limitations, Opportunity and Threat |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| VC | Value Chain |
| WB | World Bank |

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief Country Overview

Ethiopia is one of the world's oldest civilizations and home of over 80 ethnic groups that speak about 80 different languages. The population is unevenly distributed owing to varying physical factors such as altitude and climate and human factors such as type of economic activities. With an estimated population of over 91 million (of which 50.02% are males and 49.98% are females)¹. Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa after Nigeria. The population growth rate for 2001-2007 was 2.6 percent and the population is projected to reach 96 million by 2015. According to the Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2011, large proportion of the Ethiopian population (47 percent) is under the age of 15.

Ethiopia has made significant progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Ethiopia has achieved the MDG for child mortality and is on track for achieving them in gender parity in education, HIV/AIDS, and malaria. Good progress has been achieved in universal primary education, although the MDG target may not be met (the WB).

Mainstreaming the MDGs into Ethiopia's medium-term development process has helped the Government to channel resources to the critical sectors.² Ethiopia's public sector-led development strategy has contributed to considerable poverty reduction and progress toward achieving the MDGs as envisaged under the authorities Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). Economic growth has been robust, and inflation has declined to single digits (IMF October 17, 2013).

The economy has experienced strong and broad based growth over the past decade, averaging 10.6% per year in 2004/05 - 2011/12 compared to the regional average of 5.4%. Expansion of the services and agricultural sectors account for most of this growth, while manufacturing sector performance was relatively modest. Private consumption and public investment explain demand side growth with the latter assuming an increasingly important role in recent years.

Economic growth brought with it positive trends in reducing poverty, in both urban and rural areas. While 38.7% of Ethiopians lived in extreme poverty in 2004-2005, five years later this was 29.6%, which is a decrease of 9.1 percentage points as measured by the national poverty line, of less than US\$0.6 per day.

Despite the above developments, Ethiopia is still one of the poorest countries in the world. The problems and gaps of the country which causes poverty and food insecurity are the following:

¹The population projected figure is for the year 2012, based on the results of the May 2007, National Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia.

²MoFED and UNDP, ETHIOPIA MDGs REPORT 2012, December 2012 - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

- Environmental degradation
- Population pressure
- Low input and substance agricultural practice
- Recurrent drought and other potential hazards

Using the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), the target is to reduce the poverty further to 22.2% by 2014-2015 (the WB, Ethiopia Country Overview).

In 2012, Ethiopia was the 12th fastest growing economy in the world, and if this historic growth continues, it could become a middle income country in just 12 years (the WB, June 18, 2013). Per capita GDP (USD-nominal) has reached 550 (2005 EFY).

Over the past two decades, there has been significant progress in key human development indicators: primary school enrolments have quadrupled, child mortality has been cut in half, and the number of people with access to clean water has more than doubled. However, Ethiopia's Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2012 is 0.396—in the low human development category—positioning the country at 173 out of 187 countries and territories. Between 2000 and 2012, Ethiopia's HDI value increased from 0.275 to 0.396, an increase of 44 percent or average annual increase of about 3.1 percent. Between 1980 and 2012, Ethiopia's life expectancy at birth increased by 15.8 years, mean years of schooling increased by 0.7 years and expected years of schooling increased by 6.3 years. Ethiopia's GNI per capita increased by about 102 percent between 1985 and 2012.

1.2 Charities and Societies in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a country where civil society organizations, especially NGOs in the modern sense of the concept emerged recently. While traditional community institutions have been in existence since long ago, several local and international NGOs appeared in the 1980s. The number of local NGOs showed a rapid increase in the 1990s and early 2000. The Ethiopian civil code, which contained the law of associations in it was promulgated in 1960 and was very liberal for its time, with the change in nature, scope and type of NGOs in the country.

In January 2009, the government enacted a new legislation to register and regulate Charities and Societies in the country (Proclamation No. 621/2009). The proclamation is the first in its kind in specifically dealing with the issues of CSOs and NGOs.

ASE is one of the NGOs registered as an Ethiopian Resident Charity. Ethiopian Resident Charities are formed under the laws of Ethiopia and which consists of members who reside in Ethiopia and who receive more than 10% of their funds from foreign sources.

The new proclamation provides some opportunities to the NGOs:

1. Introduced legal framework. Regulates CSO to work in accordance with the law. CSOs have been working without any legal frame work;
2. Ensures at least 70% of the money from donors reaches the beneficiaries.
3. NGOs can participate in income generation activities;

However, the proclamation came also with some restrictions and challenges related with its implementation:

1. Ethiopian Residents Charities has been mandated to operate on the 9 out of the 15 operation areas; not allowed to work on human right and governance issues.
2. The allocation or demarcation of the administrative and operating cost (70/30) is ambiguous. Classification of the costs does not take into consideration the type of activities and nature of the NGOs. This situation is seriously constraining the operation of the NGOs.

1.3 Profile of Agri Service Ethiopia

Agri Service Ethiopia (ASE) is a non-governmental indigenous, not-for-profit development organization working in rural Ethiopia on integrated food security and Community Empowerment programs. ASE was established in 1969 with the major objective of improving the problem solving capacity of the rural community through education and training.

In its rural development endeavours, ASE made reorientations in its development approaches in response to the changing circumstances. It has passed through five distinct phases, while the sixth one is on-going. The initial phase was known as correspondence education and the most recent one is Community Empowerment Program (CEP) phase. Chronologically, Correspondence education, Face to Face training, Action Oriented Training, Integrated Rural Development program, Integrated Food Security Program and Community Empowerment phases were adopted by ASE, showing a pattern of institutional learning over the last four and half decades. Changes took place because of the keen interest of the organization to learn from own experiences and as a result of the shifts in rural development paradigms that took place at national and global level.

ASE had developed the first strategic plan (2000 -2006) in year 2000 that emphasized on food security program. In this period, about 30,000 households and a total population of 150,000 people have been served. With a shift from service delivery to Community Empowerment Programme, ASE had developed the second strategic plan (2007-2011) in year 2006; and built on its participatory methodologies with the determination of building community based institution, facilitating community learning & education, promoting local innovations, and Advocacy and networking. The third strategic plan (2010-2015) was developed in 2009. Although it is only three years since this strategy started implementation,

The highest organ in ASE organizational set up is the General Assembly (GA). The GA has 26 members. The next organ is the Board of Management (BoM) with five elected members from the General Assembly for four years term and the Executive Director of ASE, who is an ex-officio member of the BoM.

ASE's strategic plan and programs are in line with and in support of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) of the country in general and the agriculture and rural development

policy and strategy, the food security strategy and the National Climate Adaptation Plan of Action in particular.

Major intervention areas including house hold food security improvement, value chain development, climate change adaptation and mitigation (watershed management, small scale irrigation development, etc.) are well embedded in the five years GTP plan. This situation creates a favourable condition for smooth implementation of planned activities and increases the likelihood of sustainability of project benefits.

Currently, ASE is operating in 13 Woredas spread across five national regional states (Oromia, SNNPR, Amhara, Gambela and Benishangul Gumuz). The number of Program Offices has reached 8. As of December 2013, ASE had a total of 169 regular staff, of which female staff constitutes 22%. The qualification of the staff members include: A PhD, MA/MSc 3.6%, BA/BSc 19.5%, Diploma 51% and the remaining are twelve grades complete.

On the average, the annual budget of the organization has increased from Birr 20 million between 2000 and 2006 to Birr 64 million in 2013.

1.4 ASE Major Achievements in the Ended Strategic Plan Period

ASE has recorded success in its development intervention during the last strategic plan period (2010-2013). The key achievements include:

- Food gap periods reduced and food security situation improved as a result of yield increment achieved through agricultural intensification and diversification;
- Livestock mortality and morbidity reduced through improved vet services;
- Coverage and access to potable water significantly increased and disease incidence related to water born disease reduced;
- Poor women and jobless productive youths were able to engage in different employment opportunities through project support in off farm skills and start-up capital provision;
- Productivity and income improved from value chain intervention in Bulla, Organic coffee, haricot bean, and fishery and honey products in the respective ASE operational areas;
- Degraded areas regenerated and rehabilitated;
- Illiterate project participants developed their writing and reading skills;
- Awareness and attitudinal change of project participants improved through collective social learning sessions; and application of technically recommended development measures are widely promoted;
- Access and control of women to resources and benefits as well as their decision making power improved through community learning and mass education program sessions, engagement in women specific IGAs and taking leadership position in CBI's and other organized groups.

1.5 The Need for Revision of the Strategic Plan

Organizations are operating in dynamic and ever-changing environments. These organizational environments are characterized by a situation embedded with constant change. In order to respond to these ever-changing dynamic environments, strategic plan is one of the essential means to where organizations prepare themselves for change.

These limitations are compounded by changes in the operational environment, among other things, mainly the promulgation of proclamation No. 621/2009 pertaining to the regulation of CSOs; the international financial crisis, the growing complexity of the work, changes in the role of civil society actors, the dynamism of development approaches and strategies, and the increasing demand on CSO organizational effectiveness and accountability. These and related factors make it imperative for ASE to strategically position and restructure itself, chart its path, and find its niche.

The current strategic plan period runs from 2010-2015, however, the above stated situations has forced ASE to revise its strategic plan for repositioning itself.

In line with this, and as part of its overall organizational development endeavour, ASE is envisaging to embark on a process of strategic planning with a view to equipping itself with the appropriate policies, structure, procedures, instruments, etc., that would enable it to discharge its mission with efficiency, whereby meeting the expectations of its stakeholders.

In view of the above, ASE commissioned Wisdom Consult for the participatory undertaking (mentoring support) in developing the strategic plan for the year 2015-2019. It is believed that revising the strategic plan would enable ASE to:

- Determine **what** it intends to be in the future, and **how** it will get there
- Find the **best future** for and the best path to reach that destination.

2. THE STRATEGIC PLAN REVISION PROCESS

The strategic plan revision process is aimed at developing a revised road map for ASE that would contribute to the fulfillment of its overall vision, mission, goals and objectives.

Document review, interviews, questionnaire, field visit, interactive and participatory meetings were the methodologies for the preparation of the revised Strategic Plan. The specific objectives of revising the strategic plan include:

- Assessing ASE's environmental situation to identify strategic issues and challenges;
- Outlining and preparing clearly defined strategies and objectives to overcome weaknesses and threats as well as to exploit opportunities;
- Identifying and strategizing effective and efficient utilization of resources;
- Setting goals and developing implementation mechanisms towards achieving those goals;

- Preparing workable action plans with required resources (human, financial and material) so that ASE can achieve its essential tasks.

The methodology that underpins the revision of this strategic plan is based on the rational planning model and carried out the following elements:

1. **Document Review:** All relevant documents and records of ASE including: ASE profile, reports, Constitution, and Strategic Plan 2010-2015 were reviewed;
2. **Organizational Capacity Assessment:** the ASE Strategic Plan Team visited the operational areas of ASE and carried out focused group discussion with the community and government partners at different levels;
3. **Portfolio and competitive analysis:** Focus group discussion was undertaken with 7 Program Offices Directors and 3 Head Office (HO) staff to analyze the Project formulation and design and implementation strengths and limitations and identify the competitive advantage of ASE;
4. **Questionnaire Survey:** 3 donors and 3 Board Member have forwarded their opinions by completing the survey questionnaire;
5. **Analysis of the information** obtained through the sources stated above helped the Consultant to draw up the draft strategic plan.

3. STAKEHOLDERS ANALYSIS

ASE understands and appreciates that there are internal and external factors that positively or negatively affect its operation. It also understands that it needs to seize and build on from those factors that positively affect its operation, and brace itself up with determination to the challenges that those negative factors impose on it. The analysis of stakeholders helps to determine the degree of relationship; to know the extent of support and influence; and to identify its expectations of each of the main stakeholders. The views, needs and expectations of ASE stakeholders are presented below.

3.1 Internal Stakeholders

The internal stakeholders of ASE are its staff members and the Board of Management.

a) ASE Staff

1. The staff perceived ASE as a vibrant organization that has good image by its beneficiaries (the community it serves) good cooperation and networking with government bodies and healthy relationship with donors;
2. The staff commented that some positions are not staffed by professionals;
3. ASE needs to evaluate its program strategies and approaches such as CBI;
4. The staff appreciated the support of board and general assembly;

5. The staff expected ASE to make an effort to improve their work conditions including: pay competitive salary and benefits, and orient its staff on organizational policies/strategies and guidelines;
6. The staff have advised the organization to become a learning organization (periodically review its programs, strategies), modernize its information system, to properly document and communicate its experiences and lessons as necessary;
7. The staff would like ASE to have a program focus on: food security, climate change and market/value chain development;

b) Board Members

1. The Board envisages ASE to be exemplary and model pro-poor, strong and well established institution at the grassroots level with proven track record in rural development, networking, partnership and alliance building and facilitate enabling environment to end poverty;
2. The Board also envisaged ASE lacks strong headquarter team capable of liaising grassroots endeavor with policy;
3. The Board would appreciate if ASE links its development business to enterprise development, trying to bring small scale agricultural products industrialization concept (value chain, marketing, product transformation);
4. As the current global and national context indicates the future is for cooperatives, ASE should link its core programs to Climate Change, rural entrepreneurship, enabling target cooperatives to closely work and develop concepts with ASE;
5. ASE has to focus on maintaining its well skilled staff; promote innovations and encourage research to come up with applicable pro-poor approaches;
6. The Board also advised ASE to keep on pushing policy to convince that knowledge management is part of development but not admin cost.

3.2 External Stakeholders

The external stakeholders of ASE include government institutions, community/ beneficiaries and donors.

a) Government Sector Offices

1. The sector offices admired that ASE has strong collaboration, network and partnership with Government sector offices;
2. The Government appreciated ASE for having good organizational set up at grass root level, practical applicability of project activities, training-focused operation; participatory project implementation and staff commitment;
3. The sector offices have advised ASE to have an intensive market oriented intervention and expand its target areas in urban settings as well;
4. The Sector offices commented that ASE needs improvement in documenting and sharing of its best practices and scaling-up. They also added that ASE should have a gender balanced staff;

5. They also critically commented that ASE is phasing out from its intervention areas without adequately building CBIs capacity;
6. They advised ASE to continue to work in line with government development strategies and contribute to the realization of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP).

b) Community/ Beneficiaries

1. The community appreciated ASE's development programs that impacts their livelihood and its relationship with them;
2. The community admired ASE's organizational set up at program level, and its participatory project implementation;
3. The community expected ASE to expand its intervention in urban areas and work aggressively in market intervention;
4. The community questioned CBI functionality after ASE's phasing out.

c) Donors

1. The donors appreciated ASE's commitment to work with people/areas hard to reach demonstrate its solidarity with people living in poverty, and added that establishment of local development initiatives is quite commendable to sustain the benefits of its projects;
2. The donors commented that publicity of the work done through effective and expanded media is not as desired, and need improvement;
3. The donors commented that ASE has gaps in maintaining staff and as a result there is high staff turnover. As this can affect the overall organizational image and effectiveness and efficiency of its program delivery- the causes of the problem should be addressed;
4. The donors commented that the establishment of local development organization (CBI) is good however if it is a replica of Agri Service, very difficult to bring change, ASE should focus on creating rural movement/ transformation by making use of local institutions;
5. The donors also commented that ASE stayed long time on its approaches and strategies without revision, which portrays the organization is conservative and lesser learning place.
6. The donors advised that ASE has to have clear definition of its purpose and reason for its existence, and need to benchmark the best NGOs in the World and customize/ contextualize their experience;
7. Donors also advised ASE that the global funding market is shrinking, therefore ASE need to work hard to secure institutional donor's fund; and strengthen itself to access mega grants such as the EU and USAID;
8. Donors expected ASE to play active role in the transformation of the agriculture sector particularly small holder farmers by promoting innovations and learning at the national level.

4. SLOT ANALYSIS

The SLOT (strength, limitations, opportunities and threats) analysis as a methodology to scan, grasp and benefit from the working environment of ASE was carried at two levels: internal (governance, management, HR management, financial Resources & management, service delivery and external relations) and external (collaborators, political, economic, social and technological factors). The SLOT analysis identified several strengths and opportunities from which ASE may benefit and also revealed critical limitations and threats that ASE should address:

SLOT Analysis

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Internal Environment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">External Environment</p> | <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has good relation with project stakeholders • Has project staff at grass root level – close to the beneficiary. • Relatively decentralized power to field offices • Value local knowledge and culture • Work on diversified development activities (value chain, climate change, food security, etc.). • Having supportive board and General Assembly members • Reaching the unreached and pro poor • Long years and rich experience in rural development • Focused on community empowerment | <p>Limitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences are not documented and communicated • Limitation in replication of best experiences • Most program offices depends on a single project • Weak Monitoring and Evaluation system • Lack of specialization on a certain fields • No intervention in targeting urban poor • Has no general reserve fund • Staff turnover due to uncompetitive remuneration • Lack of strong headquarter team capable of liaising grassroots endeavor with policy • Lack of experience sharing among PO • Poor HRD, salary and benefit package |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its programs and operational areas are attractive to donors • Enabling & supportive policy environment for transforming the agricultural sector (GTP, AGP, etc.) • Many unreached community • Good acceptance from the communities • Having its own office at HQ level | <p style="text-align: center;">S+O = GROWTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to achieve greatest result • Likely to be quickest and easiest to implement • Probably justifying immediate action-planning | <p style="text-align: center;">L+O = LEVERAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal capacity building • Strengthen institutional capability |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global financial crisis limited funding opportunities. Most projects are short term • Implementation of the 30:70 law affected its operation • Climate change causing unpredictable disaster like drought and flood • Charities and societies law does not permit to accommodate software activities | <p style="text-align: center;">S+T = RESPONSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic awareness, planning, and implementation required to meet these challenges • Promote organizational image | <p style="text-align: center;">L+T = SURVIVAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Financial sustainability and organizational viability • Assess capability gaps and plan to defend/avert in very specific controlled ways. |

5. PORTIFOLIO ANALYSIS

Through facilitation of the consultant, the ASE staff have conducted the organization portfolio analysis to evaluate the performance of each program components against its design and implementation phase; and assessed in terms of organizational fit and program attractiveness.

ASE has been running six major program components, including food security, value chain, climate change adaptation, and local capacity development, excellence in community learning and Gender and HIV/AIDS. Under these key components, there are about 12 sub-components (refer Annex 2). The program components are varied across ASE program areas. For instance, social services (health, education & water supply) are categorized as a standalone program component for Goncha, Gambela and Dibate. However, these are sub-components of food security program for the other ASE Field Offices. Again, projects in Borena and Guradamole have DRR component but for others it falls under climate change adaptation program component. The same is true for small scale irrigation activities. Likewise, there were mix of project implementation strategies with program components. The case to this point is CoLF, CBI and value chain. Though the variations are appreciated, ASE needs to define and reframe its key program components and sub-components for consistency and better understanding among staff and its partners. At the same time, program implementation strategies have to be clearly stipulated and separated from program components.

The portfolio analysis result generally indicated that the project formulation and design is labeled as mediocre. Most of the project formulation and design were conducted on desk review and through rapid field data collection. There were some efforts made to undertake in-depth study/survey for program formulation like the Gambela program. However, this is not instilled as a system in ASE program formulation and design work. Therefore, this ill-practice resulted in inadequate data collection and analysis; and misinformed the project formulation. For instance, there was an irrigation intervention designed for Dibate program without having any water source in the target kebeles. Strategically, this informs ASE to gather adequate data for program formulation and design through allocating adequate time, resources and deploying staff.

When we see the implementation of ASE program components and sub components, all fall under Good except CBI development and HIV /AIDS. CBI implementation is challenged by financial/economic sustainability. HIV/AIDS has mentioned as a sub-component of cross-cutting themes but there is no any tangible activities (anti-HIV/AIDS project interventions) carried on in any of ASE program areas except addressing the issue in CoLF and mass education.

Generally, the competitive analysis showed that ASE's development interventions have high program attractiveness and good fit to the organization. Further, it is analyzed whether ASE has strong competitive position or not towards each intervention; and measuring their relative alternative coverage. The results indicated that 32% of ASE interventions fall under high

alternative coverage and strong competitive position while 55% of the interventions fall again under strong competitive position but their alternative coverage is low. Strong competitive position refers to the organization is well fit and has the required expertise in the field. The key activities fall under these category include the entire sub components of food security, value chain, environment and DRR. The remaining 13% of the interventions fall under weak competitive position and low alternative coverage, of which majority of the social services and cross-cutting themes interventions (Gender and HIV/AIDS) fall here. This is mainly due to aggressive intervention of government in social services development (health, education and water), and target women and girls under Micro & Small Enterprise (MSE). Strategically therefore ASE has to target interventions which are less addressed by the government or other development actors.

The portfolio analysis implied that the organization has no critical limitation that can hinder to carry out the existing interventions as all the interventions fall under high program attractiveness and good fit except the social services (particularly Health and Education), CBI and cross-cutting themes. Currently, the Ethiopian government has been investing huge resource in rural water supply, health and education. Therefore, ASE has to be context specific (for instance in pastoral areas and emerging regions) in implementation of social service development interventions. Due to the various complications (legal/ mandate issue, financial capacity), ASE has to see other alternatives of community organization approaches, rather than CBI. However, ASE continues to support the existing CBIs till the CBIs stand on their foot as it has already invested a lot.

Moreover ASE needs to improve its competitive position particularly in the area of market/value chain development as it is new for ASE. Again its intervention in food security has to be very innovative – in testing new technologies and less targeted crops and livestock breed but which can have significant potential to improve the livelihood of its target community. Again, in ASE strategic documents, it was mentioned about building center of excellence in community learning/education, community institution building, action research and so on. However, there was no much effort done towards building this center of excellence. ASE therefore should critically see what it means, and evaluate itself whether it has the level of competence in those fields.

6. CRITICAL ISSUES

The staff members of ASE and the consultant critically reviewed the internal and external contexts and take into account the stakeholders views and expectations and identified a number of key result areas where ASE's efforts, energy and resource have to be concentrated during the 5 year strategic plan period to realize its organizational endeavor as it is seen in the previous section. Although several critical issues were identified, the final list is comprised of the most important issues, and such issues are determined as follows:

- Which have the highest impact: these issues affect the most people in the most important way
- Which are the most immediate: they will cause additional problems if not addressed in time
- Which are closest to the shared values of the beneficiaries.

Accordingly, the following issues are identified as critical issues:

6.1 Program related Issues

6.1.1 Food insecurity

Significant parts of Ethiopia are characterized by persistent food insecurity. While droughts and other disasters (such as flood) are significant triggers, more important are the factors which create and/or increase vulnerability to these shocks and which have undermined livelihoods. These factors include land degradation, limited household assets, low levels of farm technology, lack of employment opportunities and population pressure.

Though the Ethiopian government gives emphasis on agricultural development through various interventions, the capacity of the government coupled with the magnitude of the food insecurity situation makes it tough.

To avert this situation, ASE has been working in diverse food security and livelihood diversification project in the past. However, its interventions' has been too small to bring the desired change across the target community. So, ASE needs to strengthen and expand its intervention to improve the food security situation of the community.

6.1.2 Weak market access

Recently, there is better understanding about the importance of market. Hence, governments, non-government organizations and donors consider market intervention is a key for poverty reduction, and economic growth. However, there are interwoven constraints existing for smallholders to benefit from market. The economic related constraints vary across market chain actors, and the major challenges are price fluctuation; lack of markets during harvest period; high input prices; and low quality of inputs. Imperfect marketing system prevails in all corridors of the country. Producers have no or little market information and limited bargaining power on price setting. In addition, access to credit is the other challenge, which limits the success of small holder farmers.

A given product to reach to the final consumers, it passes through different value chain actors – producers, local traders, wholesalers, processors, retailers, consumers. The vertical coordination of these actors are important for the success of the chain. Failure in one segment means failure for the whole chain. However, this understanding is not yet developed; and therefore each actor operates individually.

ASE needs to consider all these constraints whenever dealing with market. It needs to develop a well-informed market intervention.

6.1.3 Consequences of climate change

A recent mapping of vulnerability and poverty in Africa identified Ethiopia as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change given its low adaptive capacity. The limited economic, institutional, and logistical capacity to mitigate and to adapt to climate change exacerbates the vulnerability of millions of people. A large part of the country is arid or semi-arid and is highly prone to desertification and drought. The country's highland ecosystem is also becoming fragile and vulnerable, which is already under stress due to population pressure and land degradation. The impact ranges from recurrent drought and loss of biodiversity of rangeland, and of soil nutrients to catastrophic flood and declining livestock and food production.

The national program on how Ethiopia can adapt to climate change, National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA), states that repeated droughts, hunger and the recent folds are among the most serious problems affecting millions of Ethiopian almost every year. Hence, the effects of climate change must be understood and factored in development and future adaptation investments by state and non-state actors. ASE has been working in natural resource management for long, now it is time to integrate its NRM activities to climate change issues, and demands to work more systematically to address the issue of climate change with other actors.

6.1.4 Gender inequality

Despite the existence of institutional commitment to women's causes, and related policy and legislative instruments, development statistics for the vast majority of women, particularly in rural areas, lag well behind those for men.

In Ethiopia, women head about 22 percent of families, and account for 30-40% of the agricultural labour force. Women farmers provide around 50-58% of the total labor time required for crop production. Nevertheless, a strong traditional division of labor and little control/access to productive resources place women at a serious disadvantage. Moreover, Lack of training and formal engagement in decision making is a significant challenge to tapping into women's potential for the country's political, economic and social development. However, women's increased engagement in small-scale production shows growing acceptance – an opportunity for all actors, including ASE to exploit more.

6.2 Organizational Issues

6.2.1 Organizational Alignment

ASE's operations are constrained by: weak monitoring and evaluation system, lack of staff capacity building, some positions are staffed by incompetent staff, uncompetitive salary and incentive system, the organization doesn't promote/sell itself, experiences are not documented and promoted, and there is limitation in replication of best practices.

6.2.2 Resources Mobilization

ASE projects are mostly short-term and dependent on single projects. This has brought financial limitations to cover core organizational expenditures as well as adequately financing its projects and programs. ASE needs to draw up strategies for diversifying its financial resources.

7. THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF ASE

ASE has the following vision, mission, values and objectives:

7.1 Vision

ASE aspires to see a society free from poverty and marginalization

7.2 Mission

Enhance the capacities of communities to secure sustainable livelihood in the intervention areas of ASE.

7.3 Values

- a) People-centered: put people at the center of development/ value peoples' potential to implement and ensure sustainable development;
- b) Respect: the rights, beliefs, culture and indigenous knowledge, of the stakeholders;
- c) Participation: cooperation with all stakeholders;
- d) Organizational learning: systematically incorporating lessons.

7.4 Principles

- a) Participation
- b) Knowledge sharing
- c) Team spirit
- d) Transparency
- e) Accountability
- f) Gender-sensitive
- g) Cost effectiveness
- h) Flexibility

7.5 Goal

Achieving enhanced and sustained livelihood of the poor and marginalized communities.

7.6 Objectives

- a) Improved Household food security;
- b) Increased income of the poor and marginalized;
- c) Strengthen community resilience and adaptive capacity to climate variability;
- d) Improved social and economic equity of women and men;
- e) Enhanced organizational growth and sustainability.

7.7 Thematic interventions

1. Food security
2. Community training/Capacity building
3. Market development
4. Climate change adaptation and mitigation
5. Mainstream cross-cutting issues – Gender, HIV/AIDS, People with Challenges and the Environment

8. STRATEGIES

Based on the critical issues briefly discussed in section 6, it is essential to chart out strategic directions that can bring about solutions and determine its program focus. ASE realizes that it should take the required change in order to make the organization more effective than it is now. Cognizant of this, the following strategies are designed:

8.1 Program Implementation Strategies

8.1.1 ASE's Community Mobilization and Organization Approach

ASE understood that poverty is not just material deprivation but a continuous process of disempowerment that includes denial of choices/rights/opportunities, discrimination, disparity, domination, displacement, de-humanization, etc. ASE target groups, mostly poor and women segment of the society are affected by the interwoven consequences of poverty. Alleviating poverty does not end with meeting individuals'/people's material needs rather the "Strategic needs" have to be met. Individual interventions in any form do not address these root causes and hence hardly makes an impact on the unjust system. ASE will therefore induce its own community mobilization and organization approach to address the root causes of poverty.

ASE, as a strategy will encourage community members to form a group/collective from the very inception of the project. It helps them to envision their own dream to make change. Fostering people to be their own agents of change is the underlying goal of ASE's community mobilization approach. ASE's beneficiary 'Groups' are characterized by homogeneous in terms of socio economic condition, affinity among members, the members bound by common interest, mutual trust, respect and affection that support one another, Small size (10 – 30 members), participatory methods in management (or rotational leadership) and managed by own rules and regulations.

First, the groups will be organized as primary institution like 'Cooperatives', 'self-help groups', 'Saving and credit groups' (SHG) , 'Cluster level Associations'(CLAs), 'Village economic and social groups (VESA)', etc. and through time come together and transformed into formal institutions like 'Associations', "Unions", 'Farmers economic marketing Associations'(FEMA), 'Farmers' Federation', etc. The types of group formation and transformation into apex structure will be based on members' interest, capacity, and type of business engagement, economic feasibility, and legal procedure. However, ASE may advise and help the community to see the pros and cons of each community organizational arrangements. ASE will build the capacity of these groups from organization through self-sustenance throughout its engagement. Based on the above key guiding principles and intent, Depending on the interest of the beneficiary community ASE will develop its community mobilization and organization guidelines and manuals.

8.1.2 Value Chain Approach

In principle, ASE will follow the four elements of Value Chain (VC) analysis:

1. Value chain mapping, which systematically link different actors involved in the ladder of value chains: production, processing, marketing, distribution and consumption of a given product. Such a mapping examines basic features of actors, profit margins and nature of costs, flows of commodities within the chain and final destination goods produced and traded.
2. Analysis of distribution of benefits among actors of VC, which mainly deals with identification of major beneficiaries of the VC by examining profit margins at each level.
3. Inspecting the importance of upgrading in the VC that can involve improvements in quality and product design that enable producers to gain higher-value or through diversification in the product lines served. In analyzing the upgrading process, one assesses the profitability of each actor within the chain and identifies constraints that prevail in the VC.
4. Identifying governance within the VC where governance refers to the structure of relationships and coordination mechanisms that exist among actors in the VC.

ASE has adopted both the conventional and community led value chain tools in the last two years. Complementary to the usual value chain analysis, the community-led value chain methodology uses simplified tools and more genuine participatory approaches to ensure farmer participation in data collection, analysis, and identification of opportunities and design

of initiatives. Learning from its past experience, it would be advisable to use the community-led value chain tools as it has so many advantages in empowering producers, and make them benefit from market share.

8.1.3 Partnership and Networking

ASE perceives partnership as a continuum of relationships that fosters the sharing of resource and responsibility among two or more individuals, entities, and/ or organizations that have commonalities- joint interest, goal and objectives for mutual benefit.

ASE further committed to engage in successful partnership through developing appropriate strategy and decided to play a proactive role in reinforcing the existing partnership by revising the stated roles and responsibility for all partners.

The organization also realizes that networking is a mechanism or system of interaction or relationship between and/or among different parties with common mission. It is a free exchange of information, ideas and resources to accomplish organization goals in conditions of interdependence.

Accordingly, ASE will strengthen and engage in partnership both at national and international levels: ASE-NGO, ASE-GO, ASE-private, and ASE—private-GO partnership and National & international networks to maximize its outcomes.

8.1.4 Scaling up - Making a Greater Impact at the Regional & National Level

ASE has been in rural development for more than four decades. It has been operating in different contexts – pastoral/sedentary farming, low land/highland, relatively developed/emerging regions with varied social, environmental, economic and cultural contexts. These variations helped ASE to learn from its programs. On top of these, ASE has passed through different approaches – Distance education, Action Oriented Training Program (AOTP), Integrated Rural Development, Integrated Food security, Community empowerment, and Capacity Development. Each phase has its own special focus and implementation strategies. Unfortunately, these learning/ experiences are not well studied and documented. Otherwise, ASE could have been a knowledge house for development partners to share its long years of experience and practices. ASE believe that there are still opportunities to document the learning and best practices of the organization.

ASE would therefore monitor and evaluate experiences, undertake a comparative analysis, and systematize the lessons learned and document the findings. ASE establishes partnership and network to scaling up of its action research approaches and results, extension systems and community –led development approaches and others to maximize the desired impacts.

8.1.5 Strengthening of existing CBI

CBI has been used as a phase in and phase-out strategy of projects and programs implemented by ASE. As a result of this, ASE has invested a lot on CBIs though there is a

question of sustainability and their future direction. In line with the above, the following key activities would be carried to strengthen and ensure their sustainability.

- Strengthening of the existing CBIs through technical support and capacity building
- Facilitate the linkage with funding agencies, research centers, government and private sectors
- Support their effort to be reorganized into other form of economic based intuitions.

8.1.6 Phase out strategy

ASE will use group formation approach such as through community mobilization and discussion forum as an entry strategy. During a given project life ASE organizes, strengthens, build the capacity of the established community institutions/association and utilize them as exit strategy. So that at the end of the project life they will be financially and technically self-reliant institutions/associations to takeover ASE's development initiatives.

8.1.7 Community learning and capacity building

ASE will organize its target communities into groups as community mobilization and discussion forums. The forum serves as first contact and knowledge sharing platform with the community. Different adult learning and capacity building programs (literacy, distance education, mass education, and agricultural and non-agricultural skill trainings) are provided to the target community. The forum also helps to lay the ground for the future destination of the community where they could be organized as VESA, SHGs, ABCD groups, Cooperatives, FEMA etc.

8.2 Institutional Strategies

In order to increase its effectiveness and efficiency in the strategic period ASE will embark on a comprehensive organizational assessment process that will lead towards realignment of the organizational capability to the strategy.

ASE will ensure that its staff members have the relevant knowledge, skills and expertise to perform their work to consistently high standards; and to achieve their full potential compatible with the organization's strategies, policy and priorities.

Considering this in light of its Strategic Plan, ASE will give due importance to staff development program based on the following principles:

- Staff development is the intersection between the organizational expectation needs and individual employee's need;
- Staff development is a continuous, ongoing process for which both the organization and individual employees share equal responsibilities.

Remuneration and incentive mechanisms will be studied in line with the labor market in order to retain and attract competent professionals.

The information flow, cooperation and linkage between work units will be clearly identified and integrated. During the strategic period focus in this regard will be made on the following:

8.2.1 Staff Motivation and Development

- Develop incentive mechanisms for the organization which will be based on a comprehensive staff assessment tool that will be developed and implemented
- Introduce competitive salary and incentives.
- The organization will be guided by the principles of assigning the right people to the right responsibilities and recognition of outstanding performances through proper incentives
- Capacity development within the organization will be a continuous process that will be carried out based on thorough assessment of skill and knowledge gaps at different times under different work circumstances. The organization will make maximum efforts to benefit from in-house capacity development (sharing of skills and knowledge internally) and gaining knowledge and skill from outside.

8.2.2 Building Organizational Capacity

- Integration of activities and achievements of cooperative effort and teamwork in pursuit of a common purpose;
- Introduce rapid and clear communication and information flow throughout the Organization (between teams Head office to project offices and , project offices to Project offices) with a strong and functioning feedback system.;
- Work towards image building and publicity (develop promotional materials & organize image building events);
- Develop participatory monitoring and evaluation system to measure performance at outcome level and impact.
- Document learning, sharing expertise through the alliances and continue national and international engagement.

8.2.3 Resource Mobilization

Mobilizing resources is the area in which ASE has to make serious efforts. ASE will explore viable funding sources. During the strategic period focus in this regard will be made on the following:

- Development and implementation of pragmatic fund raising strategy targeting existing as well as potential local and international sources of funding;
- Development and further strengthening of links with partner institutions;
- Make planning an on-going function so that on-shelf projects would be readily available;
- Strengthen relationship with existing donors;
- Diversify donor base;

- Development of efficient and cost effective financial management (this will be achieved by reducing costs without affecting the quality and volume of services rendered to the community).

9 OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

9.1 Core Programs

9.1.1 Promoting Food security:

ASE perceived food security – “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, health life (World Bank 1986). This definition entails that food security begin with individual entitlements, though recognizing the complex inter-linkages between the individual, household, community, nation and the international economy. ASE will work on the three pillars of food security – Food availability, access to food, and Utilization/nutrition.

Objective 1: Improved food security situation of communities in ASE operational areas.

Outcome1.1: Increased Food availability

This outcome can be further breakdown into two - Increased crop production and productivity, and increased livestock production and productivity.

The ***strategic interventions*** include but not limited to:

- Promotion of crop agriculture and integrated pest management;
- Provision and use of technologies – seeds, fertilizers, farm tools and production equipment, and post-harvest technologies;
- Provision of livestock breeds;
- Feed and water availability for livestock;
- Promotion of livestock health services; and
- Training of extension agents, CAHWs, pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, and farmers.

Outcome1.2: Access to food increased

This outcome can be achieved by increasing income from agricultural and non-agricultural activities.

The key activities will include but not limited to:

- identify proactive measures that would stimulate opportunities for creative and viable income generating activities, both on farm and non-farm;
- Enhancing knowledge, attitude and skills in different agricultural as well as non-agricultural enterprises; and

- Strengthen linkage with Micro-finance institutions to access credit.

Outcome 1.3: Improved Food Utilization and health

There is a very close link between food insecurity and ill health. The resource poor, who are also the most food insecure, are characterized by the highest burden of diseases. Moreover, ill health like stunting negatively impacts on physical and intellectual development, and reduces productivity, there by further impoverishing the poor. Furthermore, improved food utilization, which is one of the pillars of food security, is understood in terms of ensuring good nutritional outcomes. The health status of people is an important determinant of nutritional outcomes. Therefore, ASE based on the context of the operational weredas, will design and implement preventive and curative health services.

The ***strategic interventions*** may include but not limited to:

- Improve environmental health/sanitation services;
- Ensure the provision of potable water; and
- Promote better nutrition.

9.1.2 Market Development

The value chain (VC) approach is increasingly being used by the donors, NGOs and governments to design and implement development programs aimed at poverty reduction and economic growth. The approach provides a useful framework for understanding key activities, relationships and mechanisms that allow producers, processors, buyers, sellers and consumers—separated by time and space—to gradually add value to the products and services as they pass from one link of the chain to the other, making it a “value chain”. ASE, therefore, shall use value chain as a strategy to respond to market problems of its beneficiaries.

The success or failure of a value chain intervention depends mainly on the partnerships that are built between actors and support providers that participate in a particular chain. The VC approach therefore requires that the VC operators are clearly identified and existing relations has to be understood. This information enables the VC supporters involved in the design and implementation of strategy to increase competitiveness and to promote the fair distribution of income among the value chain actors.

Objective 2: Increased income of smallholders through market intervention.

Outcome 2.1: Strengthened capacity of producers and producers coops/ unions

The ***strategic interventions*** may include but not limited to:

- Conduct value chain study, and design intervention strategies;
- Build capacity of producers through various trainings;

- Facilitate business, management and accounting skills development and experience sharing of groups, the cooperative management and cooperative employees;
- Work on the governance of groups and cooperatives so as to enhance/ diversify service delivery of groups cooperatives and to develop trust by its members;
- Promote horizontal linkages among groups producers, cooperatives and unions;

Outcome 2.2: Improved quality of products through introducing quality standard and quality control mechanisms.

The ***strategic interventions*** may include but not limited to:

- Introduce quality enhancing processing technologies;
- Promote quality and standard based pricing of products;
- Work with relevant Government institution and NGOs in developing/ adapting existing quality standards for inputs and products.

Outcome 2.3: Improved public and private-sector actors' linkages with Producers;

The ***strategic interventions*** may include but not limited to:

- Link research centres, producers and food processors in identifying and producing suitable production and processing technologies;
- Facilitating agreement between producers, traders and processors;
- Promote vertical linkages among VC actors;
- Strengthening linkages among producers/their organization with MFIs to access credit;
- Diversify credit provision system for primary groups, cooperatives and unions.

9.1.3 Climate change adaptation and mitigation

Effective and sustainable responses to climate change include adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation is the ability to respond and adjust to actual or potential impacts of changing climate conditions in ways that moderates harm or takes advantage of positive opportunities. Mitigation is to reduce the level of emission of gases contributing to global warming. It is important to understand that neither one alone can avoid all climate change impacts.

ASE is well aware that climate change is a complex and major environmental hazard the global community is confronted with today. It calls for tremendous commitment by all and at all levels, including individuals, communities, countries, and regions; producers, consumers, scientists and researchers; development practitioners and

policy makers, etc., to join hands to coordinate resources and knowledge to deal with the climate change issues.

Objective 3: strengthening community resilience and adaptive capacity to climate variability.

Outcome 3.1: Increased adaptation capacity of smallholders against climate change

ASE, on its part, will follow the following *strategic interventions* as adaptation options:

- Improving natural resource management through encouraging farmers to raise and plant multi-purpose trees; promotion of water shade management (conservation of natural resources and rehabilitation of degraded areas, etc.)
- Promoting irrigation agriculture (focus on low cost HH level technologies) and water harvesting;
- Strengthening drought and flood early warning systems (focus on community indigenous knowledge and practices);
- Capacity building on climate change issues.

Outcome 3:2 Reduce the level of emissions through taking mitigation measures.

ASE will follow the following *strategic interventions* as mitigation options:

- Introduction and promotion of energy saving technologies (solar, wind, bio-fuel);
- Piloting carbon sequestration in selected sites, document the lessons and share to others;
- Capacity building of communities and partners in climate change mitigation issues.

9.1.4 Mainstreaming cross cutting issues – Gender, HIV/AIDS and environment

Gender

Objective 4.1: Ensure equal participation and benefit of women and men in ASE's interventions

ASE's programs throughout all its components seek to ensure gender issues particularly women's involvement in all endeavors aiming at ensuring sustainable community development in all aspects. ASE generally works to minimize social, cultural and economic barriers undermining women's life. Moreover cultural practices affecting women will be dealt through awareness, and purposeful engagement of women in specific projects.

Moreover, ASE will develop gender indicators, and systematically monitor throughout the program implementation, and gender disaggregated data will be reflected in all ASE documents, including reporting structures.

HIV/AIDS

Objective 4.2: Reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS in ASE operational areas

According to the single point estimate, the national adult HIV prevalence is 2.3% in 2012 with an estimated 1 Million people living with HIV in the country. The epidemic which started in the mid 1980's expanded rapidly and reached a plateau in the mid -1990's. In major urban settings, the epidemic is on decline while stabilizing in rural areas. However, there is a significant variation in the epidemic among geographic areas and population groups. There are individual, socio cultural and institutional factors that influence and contribute to the spread of HIV in the country. These include: lack of adequate knowledge and skills to protect oneself, socio-cultural norms such as HTPs (like FGM, abduction, women inheritance, acceptance of premarital and extramarital sexual practices), inaccessible and inadequate basic HIV service coverage, including information and education; poverty and gender inequality.

Learning from this reality, ASE will mainstream anti- HIV/AIDS interventions in its core development programs. The key strategic interventions will include: enhance behavioral change among at risk population through training and live case testimonies, encourage community members for testing and counseling services, and purposive inclusion of PLWHA in its project activities as beneficiaries.

Environment

Objective 4.3: Ensure ASE development interventions are environmentally friendly & positively contribute towards sustainable development.

ASE is committed to sound environmental management in program development and implementation. ASE will make sure that its strategy for strengthening agricultural production relies on agro-ecological farming practices that depend little on external inputs (chemical products, fuel and machinery) and use environmentally friendly methods, resulting in both economically profitable and sustainable agriculture.

9.1.5 Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and Learning

PME is an essential component of any project or program and the organization as a whole. ASE is well aware of the importance of M&E in tracking changes and accounting for progress and resource utilization.

Objective 5: Ensure sound and effective planning, coordination and management of development programs.

ASE will have three interrelated outcomes as a result of instilling effective and efficient PME system.

Outcome 1: Improved projects/programs design and formulation;

ASE will follow the following **key strategic directions** but not limited to:

- The planning exercise should include gathering of appropriate indicators which can serve for measuring changes during monitoring and evaluation of programs;
- Make planning an on-going function so that on-shelf projects would be readily available.
- Prior to any program implementation, as a mandatory process, baseline survey should be conducted at the initial stage;
- Develop program/projects that would have adequate period of implementation to allow sufficient time to achieve planned objectives.

Outcome 2: Effective and efficient program management

ASE is also well aware of that M&E is a management tool – using the information to make decisions. To continue being a vibrant institution that genuinely makes a difference and can extensively address the complex development challenges, ASE recognizes that it shall need to improve its ability as a ‘learning organization’ with strong adaptive management competence. This process will build on strengths and the current positions to work even more successfully with partners – locally and globally.

ASE will follow the following **key strategic directions** but not limited to:

- Monitoring system will be in place that include conducting surveys, field observation, recording, and analysis.
- In addition to regular M&E activities that accounted for inputs, outputs and quantitative outcome, ASE will make greater effort towards building a more in-depth understanding of the outcomes and impact.
- ASE will use the M&E outcomes to make informed decisions for future programming.

Outcome 3: Experiences and lessons documented and shared

M&E generates information and experience for learning and ongoing development. Sharing learning takes many forms – field days, exhibitions, workshops, joint field trips with staff and partners and so on. ASE will embark on capacity building activities that help to capture, analyze and communicate aspects of learning with partners (local & international). Among other things, this includes developing stories, quality reports, and enhanced video and media interaction.

ASE will follow the following **key strategic directions** but not limited to:

- ASE will put in place in-house learning mechanism – through organizing field visit program, and/or periodic learning workshops.
- Conduct participatory and regular review meeting with concerned stakeholders. The review reports will be documented in form of reports and case stories.

- Organize and coordinate periodic evaluations for in-depth analysis of the technical, economic, social and environmental aspects to measure the effects and possible impacts of the interventions. The findings will be published and shared to project stakeholders and other like-minded organizations.
- ASE will use the existing forums and networks (like CCRDA) to share its best practices and lessons.

9.2 Institutional Strengthening

9.2.1 Building Organizational Capacity

a) Objective:

- To create an organization with clarity of responsibilities, teamwork and smooth coordination of activities that would contribute to the achievement of its strategic objectives and the key organizational priorities, measure outcomes and impact and document evidences. .

b) Outcome:

- An efficient and effective organization capable of meeting its targets

9.2.2 Staff Development and Motivation

a) Objective:

- To develop the human resources capacity and motivation levels of ASE's staff for increased motivation levels and enhanced performance that could lead to the effective achievement of its mission.

b) Outcome:

- ASE staff motivation increased and organizational performance enhanced

9.2.3 Resource Mobilization

a) Objective

- To ensure financial sustainability and diversifying financial resources by generating funds.

b) Outcome

- ASE resources base increased making the organization stable/**partially self-reliant.**

10 THE STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

10.1 Implementation Process

Implementing strategy entails converting the strategic plan into action. To pursue successfully its strategic plan, ASE needs to undertake the following broad measures pertaining to the process of strategy implementation.

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of individuals and units for its implementation;
- Breakdown the strategic plan into annual work plan;
- Communicate the strategy to all parties who have the stake in its implementation;
- Design monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with indicators for outcome and impact for the realization of the plan into action.

10.2 Organizational Issue

Strategy execution depends heavily on the structure and system in place. There needs to be a good match between the system, and the resources (human, financial and material resources). Therefore, ASE should review its structure, systems and human resources in line with the new strategic direction of the organization.

10.3 Work Plans

The strategic plan provides the basis for preparing annual work plan and budget. The strategic plan has to be *cascaded* into clear, understandable and measurable annual plans and budgets. This is the key to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategic plan. The annual work plan will indicate the tasks to be implemented during the year with timetables and implementation responsibilities. Each work unit has the responsibility of preparing the annual work plan and budgets for its respective units in consultation with the Executive Director. The technical, finance and administration units have to coordinate and synchronize work plans for implementation, and will be evaluated on the basis of performance of the implementation. The implementation schedule (action plan and corresponding budget) of the strategy is depicted in Annex 1.

10.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

This strategic plan is a five-year plan, which is concretized in annual work plans. The Strategic plan will be monitored and evaluated at different levels. The Board of ASE will oversight the implementation of the strategic plan, and monitor on annual bases against the work plans that are endorsed by the General Assembly at the beginning of the fiscal year. The Secretariat will review the strategic plan implementation on quarterly bases.

The strategic plan will be reviewed in the presence of all concerned stakeholders in its mid-term, and the necessary correction measure will be employed, if any. Moreover, ASE

management will conduct outcome monitoring every six months based on the set criteria and indicators of change in addition to the regular technical support provided by the Program staff at the HO and the follow up program conducted by the core staff of the Project Offices. The M&E should show the evidence in documentation.

10.5 Assumptions, Risks and Mitigation Activities

The following assumptions, risks and mitigation activities are considered during the strategic plan period.

10.5.1 Assumptions

- The good partnership with the national and regional governments as well as the prevailing enabling policy environment continues during the Strategic Plan period;
- The global financial crisis will improve and funding is available to meet the planned objectives;
- Incidences of emergency situations in the operational areas will not be beyond the available resources of the development partners.

10.5.2 Possible Risks and Mitigation Activities

| Possible Risks | Mitigation Activities |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regional and/or national government might introduce inconvenient regulations and directives that hinder smooth implementation of the strategic plan; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate roundtables of government counterparts and development partners to sort out inconvenience through negotiations and dialogue. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The global financial crises continues and access to funding opportunities to realize the plan could be difficult; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider alternative fund raising strategies like targeting local donors or the diasporas; • Scale down operations to optimal levels |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The incidence of emergency situations in operational areas could be more frequent and widespread to such a magnitude that they entirely undermine the potential to achieve the objectives in this plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with all partners to bring the risk to manageable scale of operation and resource requirement |

ASE - Strategic Plan 2015-2019

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 2 | Institutional Strengthening | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | | | | | | | | |
| 2.2 | | | | | | | | |
| 2.3 | | | | | | | | |

Annex 2: Proposed Budget for 2015-2019

| No. | Strategy/Activities | Benchmark | Year | | | | | Total Required Budget |
|----------|--|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| | | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | |
| 1 | Core programs | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Food security | 13935591.21 | 15329150.33 | 16862065 | 18548272 | 20403099 | 22443409 | 93585995.69 |
| 1.2 | Value chain development | 7196668.56 | 7916335.416 | 8707969 | 9578766 | 10536642 | 11590307 | 48330019.35 |
| 1.3 | Climate change adaption and mitigation | 6087145.38 | 6695859.918 | 7365446 | 8101991 | 8912189.6 | 9803409 | 40878894.39 |
| 1.4 | CBI development | 1922186.62 | 2114405.282 | 2325846 | 2558430 | 2814273.4 | 3095701 | 12908655.69 |
| 1.5 | Excellence in community learning | 2314759.38 | 2546235.318 | 2800859 | 3080945 | 3389039.2 | 3727943 | 15545021.24 |
| 1.6 | Gender and HIV/AIDS | 765928.83 | 842521.713 | 926773.9 | 1019451 | 1121396.4 | 1233536 | 5143679.31 |
| 1.7 | Program Personnel | 6164130.36 | 6780543.396 | 7458598 | 8204458 | 9024903.3 | 9927394 | 41395895.49 |
| 2 | Institutional Strengthening | 14764893.5 | 16241382.85 | 17865521 | 19652073 | 21617281 | 23779009 | 99155266.44 |
| | Total | 53151303.84 | 58466434.22 | 64313078 | 70744385 | 77818824 | 85600706 | 356943427.6 |

Annex 3: Portfolio Analysis

ASE program Portfolio analysis

| Intervention Areas | Average beneficiary per project per year | Comparative Performance Ranking |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Food security | | |
| 1.1 Increasing crop Production | 1,989 farmers (451F) | Strong competitive position, High program attractiveness but low alternative coverage |
| 1.2 Increasing livestock production | 1,251 farmers | Strong competitive position, High program attractiveness but low alternative coverage |
| 1.3 Diversify rural income and employment opportunities (On farm & Off-farm income generation) | 1,136 (590F) | Strong competitive position, High program attractiveness & low alternative coverage |
| 1.4 Improved water supply service Social-services provision (Health, Water supply, Education and Road access) | 5,434 people (1809F) | Weak competitive position, High program attractiveness & high alternative coverage |
| 1.5 Nutrition (this is specific to Gambella) | | Strong competitive position, High program attractiveness but low alternative coverage |
| 2.Value chain development | | |
| Coffee, fishery, bulla, vegetables, spices, haricot bean and honey | 1195 producers (552 F) | Strong competitive position, High program attractiveness but low alternative coverage |
| 3.Climate change adaptation | | |
| 3.1Small-scale irrigation | | Strong competitive position, High program attractiveness but low alternative coverage |
| 3.2Natural Resource Management | | Strong competitive position, High program attractiveness but low alternative coverage |
| 3.3Strengthen local Early warning system | | Strong competitive position, High program attractiveness but low alternative coverage |
| 4.Local capacity development | | |
| 4.1. Community Based Institution development | | Weak competitive position, Low program attractiveness & low alternative coverage |
| 4.2. Strengthening local government capacity | | Weak competitive position, Low program attractiveness and low alternative coverage |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| 5.Excellence in community learning | | |
| 5.1 Community Learning and Action/COLF | | Strong competitive position, High program attractiveness but low alternative coverage |
| 5.2 correspondence and community education | | Strong competitive position, High program attractiveness but low alternative coverage |
| 6.Cross-cutting themes | | |
| 6.1Gender | | Weak competitive position, High program attractiveness but low alternative coverage |
| 6.2 HIV/AIDS | | Weak competitive position, High program attractiveness and low alternative coverage |

ASE Project portfolio analysis

| | | Project formulation and Design | |
|------------------------------|----------|---|--|
| Implementation (Realization) | | Good | Mediocre |
| | Good | 1.5 | 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2 |
| | Mediocre | 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2 | 4.1, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2 |

ASE Competitive Analysis

