



Institutional Capacity Development to Build a Competitive Apiculture Sub-sector: Lessons from ASPIRE

Background

The Apiculture Scaling-up Programme for Income and Rural Employment (ASPIRE) is aimed at reducing poverty by setting up a dynamic and sustainable apiculture sector in Ethiopia. To keep the sector competitive in a dynamic value chain environment, it's critical to have capable support institutions and strong sector leadership.

Previous development initiatives in the apiculture sector in the country include those run by SNV/BOAM and ACDI/VOCA¹, among others. Institutions involved in ASPIRE include producers, laboratories (to check product quality), government institutions, knowledge institutes and national sectoral associations, such as the Ethiopian Apiculture Board (EAB), Ethiopian Honey and Beeswax Producers and Exporters Association (EHBPEA) and the Ethiopian Beekeepers Association (EBA).

The goal

To keep the sector competitive in a dynamic value chain environment, it's critical to have capable support institutions and strong sector leadership. The programme approach consists of addressing constraints in the apiculture sub-sector development through:

- establishing/sustaining honey and other bee products on a national platform
- supporting sector associations and environment to become inclusive and self-steering
- developing and sharing apiculture sector knowledge
- improved collaboration among actors.

The solutions and results

Develop sectoral associations: ASPIRE's initiative of institutional development for apiculture is aimed at providing support to federal-level sector associations, including the EHBPEA, EAB and EBA, and setting up regional-level branches of the EAB. Facilitated by ASPIRE, the sector associations clarified their roles and mandate boundaries, and developed a joint sector action plan with relevant government institutions. The plan focused on cross-cutting sectoral issues; sector promotion and marketing; and providing the associations with support to take on the leadership of running sectoral initiatives.

Develop service providers' capacity: ASPIRE established a system of training for all the actors; provided training of trainers (ToT); and gave material supplies (with sample apiculture equipment to start a business) to the beekeepers and input suppliers. About 158 different business development service providers were identified to help facilitate the commercialisation and expansion of honey production.

Strengthen multi-stakeholder platform: To enhance the national apiculture value chain development network and joint effort of stakeholders, about 18 actors were identified and linked in a national-level multi-sectoral platform (MSP). These include ATA, GIZ, EFMHACA, MOLF, EHBPEA, EAB, ESAS, ECAE, Police, EMDIDI, ESA, CPA and Oxfam², as well as research institutes, banks, micro-finance institutions, universities and input suppliers. As an outcome of the MSP, consultations were held in Tigray, Amhara, SNNPR and Oromia to strengthen collaborations between actors. For example, in Tigray, the key stakeholders signed a memorandum of understanding to address the problems of adulteration, chemical use and informal trade. In addition, a taskforce developed quality management manuals and a food safety guide.

¹ SNV refers to SNV Netherlands Development Organisation; BOAM, SNV's Business Organisations and Access to Markets project (2008–2012); ACDI/VOCA, Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance.

² ATA, Agriculture Transformation Agency; EFMHACA, Ethiopian Food, Medicines and Health Care Administration and Control Authority; MOLF, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries; ESAS, Ethiopian Society of Apicultural Sciences; ECAE, Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise; EMDIDI, Ethiopian Meat and Dairy Industry Development Institute; ESA, Ethiopian Standard Agency; CPA, Cooperative Promotion Agency.

Knowledge development with higher institutes and research centres: ASPIRE supported the Holeta Bee Research Center (HBRC) and other regional research institutes, such as the Sekota Dryland Agricultural Research Center, in its research and outreach activities to help strengthen the generation and dissemination of skills and technological innovations.

In addition, ASPIRE supported higher education institutions, particularly in organising an apiculture Master's degree programme at Bahir Dar University.

Cooperatives and grass root producer organisations: ASPIRE facilitated the capacity development of about 346 cooperatives representing 9,765 individual members. It also supported the capacity development of about 82 honey cooperatives/unions, and linked 38 of them with beekeepers.

Ethiopian agri-food laboratories and government staff capacity building: With the overall objective of 'strengthening the testing capacity of Ethiopian agri-food laboratories for testing residues, and selected hard metals and full honey analysis', ASPIRE conducted capacity assessments of 10 agri-food laboratories in Ethiopia. To respond to identified gaps, a total of 21 laboratory technicians from nine agri-food laboratories (government, private and university) were trained in the general principles of laboratory analysis and management; full honey analysis; and residue analysis.



Following the training, on-the-job coaching was given to support lab technicians with the practical application of their knowledge. SNV believes that the laboratories and technicians are assets for the country and can help to end foreign currency payments being made to honey testing services abroad.

Legal framework development support: The national team led by EMDIDI and supported by ASPIRE drafted a proclamation and regulation for honey and beeswax marketing. This was submitted to the Council of Ministers for endorsement. The draft proclamation and regulation mainly focuses on establishing organised marketplaces, measures to control quality and adulteration, and mechanisms for effective implementation.

Quality assurance manuals: With the objective of contributing to protecting the quality and safety of bee products (specifically honey), ASPIRE supported the development of 'quality management manuals' for honey: 1) quality production and harvest manual; 2) processing and marketing manual; and 3) food safety code of conduct manual. Comments and feedback were received from all relevant stakeholders. The manuals were published and distributed to all value chain actors in 2017.

Lessons learned

- Establishing three national sectoral associations has had a positive influence on the government, and sharpened its focus on developing the apiculture sector. The institutions established at regional and district level have also strengthened the networking of the value chain actors. The national-level trade fairs, exhibitions and development of institutional capacity improved the confidence of local actors, promoted Ethiopian honey globally, and offered lessons on the standard of a good-quality honey supply.
- ASPIRE-supported institutional development introduced an innovative extension system that upgraded beekeepers as leaders, and gave comprehensive skills to the beekeepers with ongoing and results-based monitoring. The introduction of apiculture-specific postgraduate-level training and engagement of the bee research centre are strategic institutional initiatives to be strengthened further.

