



CommonSense

Geodata for Agriculture and Water (G4AW) improves food security in developing countries by using satellite data. Netherlands Space Office (NSO) is executing this programme, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The CommonSense project in Ethiopia targets smallholder farmers in different regions in the country, directly or through actors across their value chain including unions, cooperatives, microfinance institutions (MFIs) and extension services. By providing them with actionable information based on earth observations, geographic and other data, the project aims to strengthen these value chains and eventually improve their livelihoods and food security. CommonSense is developing a platform of specialized information services such as unions' management systems (including dashboards for seasonal monitoring, output marketing and members' management), a weather forecast SMS service for smallholders, tools for loan portfolio monitoring and risk assessment and tools in support to extension services. End users will interact with the CommonSense platforms through applications designed to meet their specific needs.

Key Users

CommonSense targets smallholder farmers in different production areas of the country and different crops (e.g. sesame,

malt barley). CommonSense will provide information directly to farmers through weather forecasts, to help them make more informed decisions on farming activities. Other targeted users within CommonSense include: agricultural unions and cooperatives, agro-processors and out-growers, microfinance institutions, and the Ethiopian Government. The Ethiopian Government, in particular the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources (MOALR) and the National Meteorology Agency (NMA) are interested in improving the quality of their extension services through better short and medium term weather forecasts and better agro-meteo advisory. CommonSense will support such activities piloting a demonstrator, the 'AgroMeteo Advisory Support Tool', at both the federal and local levels.

Business model

The business model will be sustained through different modalities, including subscription to the services based on annual fees or payment based on transactions. In perspective the CommonSense services will be integrated with others (e.g. the eVoucher system, the MFIs management information systems) to strengthen their value proposition for the users.

For the government applications CommonSense is exploring other solutions, compatible with the present regulatory framework, including public and donor funding.

The proposed services support farmers directly or through their intermediaries (Unions, MFIs, extension services), combining management information, weather forecasts, satellite based seasonal monitoring and other EO and geodata.



Partnership

The CommonSense partnership consists of the following partners that complement each other's skills and interests:

- IT platform and Unions', etc., business development: APPOSIT (Ethiopia)
- Microfinance institutions and MFI business development: Busaa Gonofaa (Ethiopia), SFPI (Ethiopia), HARBU Microfinance Institution (Ethiopia) and ICCO Terrafina Microfinance (Netherlands)
- Remote sensing services: Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands (Netherlands)
- User needs assessment, pilots and capacity building: Exotalent (Ethiopia) and Facilitators for Change (Ethiopia)
- Wageningen Environmental Research (Alterra) (Netherlands) project lead, agricultural monitoring and risk assessment. It also links with the WUR BENEFIT project in Ethiopia, which include the Sesame Business Network support programme and CASCAPE (best farming practices)
- Weather information services: Weather Impact (Netherlands).

The project has established Memorandum of Understanding with the MOALR and the NMA, and collaborations with the Federal Cooperative Agency, the Agricultural Transformation Agency and other government organisations of Ethiopia. It is also cooperating with Agriterra (Netherlands).

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