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## SNAPSHOT

# Trainings Trigger Solutions for Competitiveness

### Leaders in honey industry develop new campaign to address industry constraints



Thanks to USAID-CIAFS training, the EHWPEA's new awareness campaign will help address problems of adulteration in the honey sector, increasing competitiveness and economic growth.

**“Our intervention will hopefully go a long way towards containing and addressing the problem.”**

— Shimelis Abera, *Ethiopian Honey and Wax Producers and Exporters Association (EHWPEA)*

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The Ethiopian honey sector holds a great deal of potential for improving smallholder food security. Approximately 1.4 - 1.7 million Ethiopian households maintain beehives to generate income, and the sector contributes US\$1.6 million annually to the national economy. However, the practice of adding extraneous or inferior ingredients, known as adulteration, lowers the quality of honey and has been a key constraint to Ethiopian apiculture growth and market opportunities. Honey is susceptible to adulteration with synthetic sweeteners that are cheaper than natural bee honey, such as sugar syrups and molasses, which creates a considerable economic and regulatory problem.

The Ethiopian Honey and Wax Producers and Exporters Association (EHWPEA) have struggled to address this challenge in the honey sector. “The USAID-CIAFS training on competitiveness, however, has changed that,” says Shimelis Abera, EHWPEA General Manager.

The Capacity to Improve Agriculture and Food Security (CIAFS) program, supported by USAID, empowers agents of change through leadership trainings to help transform the Ethiopian agriculture sector. Shimelis participated in two USAID-CIAFS private sector trainings that focused on competitiveness and entrepreneurship. The competitiveness training, he said, was an eye-opener for his association.

Association leaders are now using planning tools to develop a strategy to enhance the competitiveness of the Ethiopian honey sector in the global and regional market by addressing the adulteration issue head-on, as well as identifying major marketing problems that have plagued the sector. Based on the training, they identified eleven project ideas, all of which are aimed to achieve more competitiveness in the honey industry.

This year, the association is leading an awareness-raising TV campaign targeting producers, consumers, and the public sector to publicize the consequences of adulteration for consumer confidence, the export market, and human health, and to let the public know what steps can be taken to address these risks. Additionally, they're launching a multi-stakeholder honey panel to bring together producers, processors, consumers, and regulatory bodies to discuss adulteration, its impact on the sector, and potential solutions. The panel will publicize recommendations and advocate for key reforms, including developing a certification program and enforcing health and safety standards.

“All the stakeholders that I have talked to are happy to begin addressing adulteration cooperatively, and our intervention will hopefully go a long way towards containing and addressing the problem,” says Shimelis.

Like all USAID-CIAFS training participants, EHWPEA trainees will receive follow up support so they can cascade the leadership training to other members in their association. USAID-CIAFS also supports the Ethiopian apiculture industry by sponsoring the 2012 ApiExpo, which brings together over 2,000 participants to share information and technologies, as well as market information and linkages to improve incomes and food security.