

WEMA 2009 Social Audit Report

Ethical, Social, Cultural and Commercialization Audit Report for
the Water Efficient Maize for Africa Project, 2009

Ethical, Social, Cultural and Commercialization Program
McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health
University Health Network and University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada
February 8, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Drought is one of the greatest constraints for African agriculture, severely affecting maize crop, the continent's most important food staple, and a major source of income for rural communities.

The Water Efficient Maize for Africa Project (WEMA) is a public-private partnership (PPP) led by the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), and includes the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre, Monsanto (a private agricultural company), and the national agricultural research systems (NARS) in Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. The project seeks to introduce drought tolerant maize to these five countries and make it available, royalty free, to small-scale farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Ethical, Social, Cultural, and Commercialization (ESC²) Program of the McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health (MRC), University Health Network and University of Toronto, conducted an independent social audit of the WEMA project in 2009. A social audit can be defined as a process whereby an audit team collects, analyses, and interprets descriptive, quantitative and qualitative information from stakeholders to produce an account of a project's ESC² performance and impact.

A preliminary social audit was conducted in February, 2009 - March, 2009 and the social audit itself, which forms the basis of this report, in October, 2009 - November, 2009. The audit was carried out to measure project performance and report on ESC² aspects of the WEMA project, from the viewpoint of a range of stakeholders. The ESC² performance measures were based on an analytical framework that covers all aspects of the WEMA project. The goal of the social audit reporting is to improve accountability, transparency, and management, and facilitate trust-building among WEMA partners, and between WEMA and the general public.

In this report, we focus on the social audit conducted in October, 2009 - November, 2009, which we refer to as the *2009 Social Audit*. Where appropriate, we compare our results to those of the preliminary audit, identifying where change has occurred. We also make recommendations to the WEMA team based on our results.

ESC² TOOLS AND METHODS USED TO CONDUCT THE SOCIAL AUDIT

In the 2009 Social Audit, the ESC² team (Appendix 1) evaluated WEMA's performance using a range of lenses contained in our analytical framework (including technical, regulatory, deployment, capacity building, charitable purpose, communication, and project management and governance). The viewpoints of 100 people (including regional farmers' associations, researchers, non-governmental organization executives, seed company executives, regulators, and members of over a dozen stakeholders groups) from across the five WEMA countries (Kenya, South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda) were collected (Figure 1), using a quantitative questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. Responses to the quantitative questionnaire were rated on a five-point scale of poor to excellent (poor (1), fair (2), good (3), very good (4), excellent (5)). All interviews were done face-to-face. Thirty-two of the stakeholders interviewed were repeat interviewees from the preliminary audit. We also selected up to 20% percent of all interviewees for the 2009 Social Audit from WEMA country teams. This selection process was based on our finding from the preliminary audit that interviewees were expressing opinions about GM crops more generally, without necessarily specifying knowledge of the WEMA project. Therefore, in the 2009 Social Audit,

we ensured all interviewees were knowledgeable about the WEMA project to elicit WEMA-focused responses, and that the stakeholder groups reflected WEMA's Communication Strategy. The diversity of stakeholders interviewed is shown in Figure 1, below.

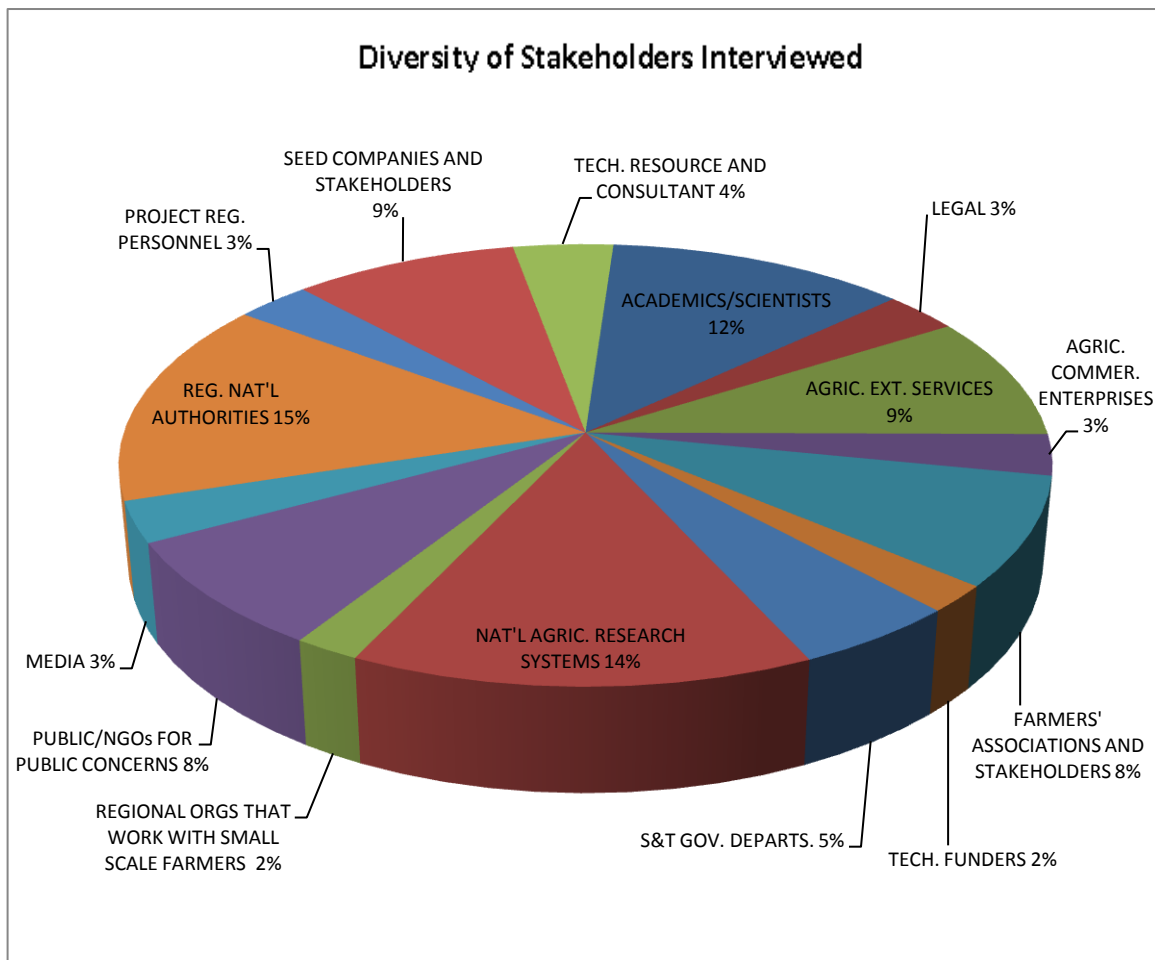


FIGURE 1: STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED IN THE 2009 SOCIAL AUDIT N=100

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings of the 2009 Social Audit are based on the stakeholder interviews conducted in the five WEMA countries (Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda). These findings are a result of analysis of the data from both the quantitative questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews.

I. OVERALL ESC² EVALUATION OF THE WEMA PROJECT IS 'GOOD' AND VARIES AMONG STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Overall, the WEMA project was rated as 'good' for its handling of ethical, social, and cultural (ESC²) issues, with variation by country and stakeholder group. The highest

ratings were among regulatory personnel in the project¹ and the lowest by seed companies, farmers' associations, and related stakeholders.

II. SELF-REPORTED KNOWLEDGE OF THE WEMA PROJECT IS 'GOOD' AND VARIES AMONG STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Participants in the 2009 Social Audit rated their own knowledge about the WEMA project as 'good'. Regulatory personnel dealing with the project, as well as those from technical resource and agricultural commercialization enterprises, had the greatest self-reported knowledge of the WEMA project. Legal consultants, seed companies, and academics and scientists had among the lowest.

III. INTERACTIONS AMONG WEMA PARTNERS IS 'GOOD' TO 'VERY GOOD'

Stakeholders rated the interaction among WEMA partners in the project as 'good' to 'very good'. This was the highest rating of all ESC² aspects of the WEMA project, in the 2009 Social Audit. Stakeholders reported that interaction among implementing agencies had become more cooperative and open (illustrated by clear, joint-work plans of partners presented to the local regulators, good team work, and well structured implementation processes), but that these interactions could be improved further.

IV. COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE PRELIMINARY AUDIT

Communication between the WEMA project and stakeholders has improved since the preliminary audit. WEMA project's communication with stakeholders was rated between 'fair' and 'good' in the 2009 Social Audit, an improvement from the preliminary audit rating of 'fair'. Respondents who gave lower ratings did, however, identify concerns about information sharing and stakeholder engagement.

V. LOCAL NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE KEEN TO COLLABORATE WITH WEMA

Stakeholders from Local National Organizations are keen to collaborate with WEMA to strengthen and broaden awareness creation and improve project success. Some of these stakeholder groups, particularly farmers' associations and biotechnology awareness associations, encouraged WEMA's project management to tap into comparative strengths and advantages of other local organizations.

VI. STAKEHOLDERS WANT TRANSPARENCY AND INPUT ON THE POTENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF WEMA MAIZE

Stakeholders want improved transparency and input on the potential characteristics of WEMA products. Academics and NGOs, in particular, requested greater information on the identity of the drought tolerant genes and whether WEMA has taken into account the

¹ Personnel within the WEMA project that conduct risk assessment and prepare safety data dossiers for submission to national regulatory authorities for confined field testing.

issue of stacked traits. Academics, scientists, and farmers' associations want their preferences for WEMA products taken into account at the development stage. They suggested that the WEMA project may need to consider stacking other traits such as insect and herbicide resistance, grain color, hardness, and nutrition value.

VII. THE STRUCTURE OF WEMA'S IPR POLICY IS 'GOOD', BUT NOT WELL UNDERSTOOD BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS

When stakeholders were asked about the perceived effectiveness of the structure of WEMA's IPR policy and licensing issues for achieving WEMA's charitable purpose, their average rating was 'good'. However, those who had lower ratings did not understand it well and had some negative misconceptions about the WEMA project. Interviewees indicated that fears and perceptions exist about the use of royalty free use by Monsanto, as a way to popularize its technologies before slowly introducing their other biotechnologies.

VIII. THERE IS PERCEIVED NEED FOR CAPACITY BUILDING OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND REGULATORY SYSTEMS

With regards to the strengthening of knowledge, training, and experience in the development of agro-biotechnology crops in national agricultural research and regulatory systems, the average rating by stakeholders was 'good'. Some interviewees said that WEMA participants have benefited from a number of training programs that have improved their understanding and expertise. Interviewees also identified a need for WEMA to support human resource and infrastructural capacity building of both the research organizations and the regulatory authorities for smooth implementation of the project.

APPENDIX 1: SOCIAL AUDIT TEAM

NAME	INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION	CATEGORY OF MEMBERSHIP	REGIONAL AFFILIATION
Abdallah Daar	McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health	WEMA Co-Principal Investigator	Canada/Tanzania
Jennifer Deadman	McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health	Research Analyst	Canada
Obidimma Ezezika	McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health	Team Leader	Canada/Nigeria
James Lavery	McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health	Co-investigator/Consultant	Canada
Justin Mabeya	McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health	Consultant	Kenya
Dominique McMahon	McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health	PhD Candidate	Canada
Peter A. Singer	McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health	WEMA Co-Principal Investigator	Canada
Jerome Singh	Centre for the AIDS Program of South Africa (CAPRISA), University of KwaZulu-Natal.	Co-investigator/Consultant	South Africa
Andrew Taylor	McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health	Program Manager	Canada
Fiona Thomas	McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health	Research Assistant	Canada