

The First Ethiopian Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) Launched on March 15

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The Ethiopian Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) was officially launched on March 15, 2022, in Addis Ababa. With the presence of the three implementing sector Ministries, national and international nutrition partners, regional bureau representatives, and academicians, the FBDG was colorfully launched at Capital Hotel.

The launching event was opened by the welcoming remark of Deputy Director-General of EPHI Dr. Getachew Tollera. After that, keynote speeches were given by H.E Dr. Lia Tadesse, minister of ministry of health (MOH), H.E Professor Berhanu Nega, minister of education, and the state minister of agriculture H.E. Dr. Fikru Regassa.

Ms. Fatouma Seid, country representative of United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Dr. Namukolo Covic, Director-

General Representative to Ethiopia, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). and Inge D. Brouwer, Associate professor at Wageningen University and Research also delivered their opening remarks.

The speakers noted the rationale behind the development of the guideline, explaining that, it is one of the means to transform the food system. The guideline is one tool to reduce the triple burden of malnutrition i.e, undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and growing problems of overnutrition (overweight and obesity) in Ethiopia through various methods.

The FBDGs envisioned to tackle such problems and contribute to the implementation of national policies, programs, and strategies *(Continued to P3)*

Message From The Coordinator



Aregash Samuel (PhD), Senior Researcher at EPHI and NIPN Coordinator

In collaboration with the C4N team, IFPRI, and GIZ, the team is working to see the potential ways to expand NIPN phase 2 to a higher level with

Greetings to all!!
The first quarter of 2022 was spent engaging in various activities.

One of the key performances is the actions and plan revisions related to the extension of NIPN phase one and the alignment of NIPN to its second phase. Prior discussions were held among the relevant partners whose contribution was critical to the execution of the NIPN project as well as ensuring its transition into the second phase.

In collaboration with the C4N team, IFPRI, and GIZ, the team is working to see the potential ways to expand NIPN phase 2 to a higher level with measurable results. As a result, the NIPN phase two write-ups, financial documents, budgets, and no-cost extension activities are nearly completed. The discussions will be better absorbed and internalized in May during the joint meeting.

At this point, I'd like to welcome our new technical partner, the GIZ team in general, and Dr. Archana in particular, who has recently joined NIPN Ethiopia and will work with us as one of the technical advisors in the NIPN's second phase. GIZ will collaborate with our previous technical partner, IFPRI in the provision of technical support for NIPN Ethiopia. We anticipate excellent teamwork, a strong spirit

of partnership, and invaluable assistance from the new GIZ team. During the initial discussions of NIPN 2.0 expansion, it was stressed that NIPN Ethiopia should strengthen its exemplary work and that the platform should be expanded to regional states. Discussions are underway among our partners to clarify and move forward with delegating and establishing roles and responsibilities, identifying areas of partnership and technical support programs.

The NIPN team is working diligently to complete the activities scheduled for 2022. As is expected, the policy question formulation (PQF) plans will be prepared as per the expected level of responding to questions. Demands and interests are coming from other EPHI directorates such as the Knowledge Translation Directorate (KTD), requesting that they could respond to some of the questions that had been forwarded to the NIPN team. Once both the NIPN team and KTD finalizes the discussion, the team will move on responding to the question.

In addition, NIPN team works towards responding to some of the questions derived from preliminary data from the National Food and Nutrition Baseline Survey 2021. This year, there is a plan to expand NIPN to regional states, and as part of that de-

liverable, a feasibility study will be conducted with regional Public Health Institutes (PHIs) to define objectives, scope, financial and material resource implications, human resource requirements, capacities, and the policy environment/ interest of those institutions to determine whether they are in a position to host NIPN in their respective regions.

The NIPN data repository is one of the primary goals for which NIPN was established. To make use of the data repository as a useful resource platform, one of the activities planned for this year is to upload additional data sets. One key area of focus this year will be promoting this data repository to various stakeholders to increase data requests and demand by increasing the visibility of NIPN as a data and evidence source.

This quarter's capacity-building activities began with a need-based LiST training, in which 26 researchers were introduced to the LiST software. Following the training, the NIPN team is expected to respond to one or two questions as a practical application of the training.

The training and webinars will continue as planned, in this quarter,

(Continued to P9)

The National Food and Nutrition Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Steering Committee (MER-SC) met quarterly to monitor sector activities and discuss related issues. The first MER SC workshop of 2022 was conducted on February 23, 2022, in Adama. The MER SC, which is chaired by Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI), conducted its quarterly workshop. Dr. Aregash Samuel, Senior Researcher and NIPN coordinator at EPHI welcomed the participants and encouraged them to give inputs to the MER SC Terms of Reference (TOR). She reiterated the important contribution of the MER SC in improving current nutrition policies and programs.

The agenda of the workshop included; a discussion on the revised MER SC TOR, a presentation and discussion on the revised health



management information system (HMIS) tool and multi-sectoral Food and Nutrition scorecard indicators, a rapid review of the landscape of nutrition, the Seqota Declaration expansion phase, and Biofortification research that was done by EPHI and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) were the points of discussion.

The main discussion of the workshop revolves around the revised MER SC TOR. The TOR encompasses the background, role, and responsibilities of the MER SC, objectives, core activities, membership, and working groups establishment.

After each presentation, the MER SC members were grouped into two and had discussed the revised TOR in detail. And after a thorough discussion, two working groups were established. The two committees are the M&E group and the research working group. The MER SC members agreed to meet and set the way forward to define the role and the scope of the working groups within a short period.

The working groups that have been established have to prepare their annual work plan and need to develop their TOR which will be presented in the next meeting.

The First Ethiopian Food-Based Dietary Guidelines Launched ...continued from P1

As mentioned during the launch, the national policies, programs, and strategies have indicated the need for developing Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) as one of the game-changing solutions recommended during the dialogue for the United Nations Food System Summit.

As it is stated in the launch, the goal of the FBDGs is to reduce malnutrition and diet-related public health problems in the country by promoting a healthy diet among different population groups. The guideline is organized to provide dietary recommendations for the Ethiopian population, aged two years and older, for increased diet quality including diversity and food safety for optimal health. Additionally, it is prepared to promote broad food system actions supporting diet quality being sensitive to sustainability.

The guideline is prepared with the lead of EPHI and in close collaboration with the MOH, MOA, and MOE. Nutrition partners such as FAO, ILRI, CGIAR (formerly the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research), and Wageningen University and Research collaborated to develop and finalize the FBDGs.



On March 31, the NIPN Webinar "Positioning the Ethiopia Food Systems Transformation Pathway for Accelerated Impacts at Scale: What Next?" was held based on NIPN annual plan.

The NIPN virtual webinar was co-hosted by the National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN), the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI), and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

The webinar topic was chosen on the fact that Ethiopian policies and programs advocate for a sustainable food system to combat malnutrition. Such appeals must be accompanied by practical means of intervention and also the improvement of the food system requires the participation of sector ministries, a wide range of stakeholders, and partners who have an impact on the food system directly and indirectly.

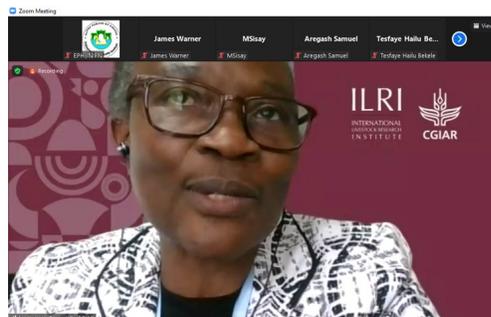


As a result, the webinar was designed to raise participants' awareness of how to strengthen Ethiopia's food system transformation through multisectoral efforts, as well as to highlight unfinished business in the food system that requires action.

Dr. Aregash Samuel, Senior Researcher at EPHI and NIPN coordinator, began the webinar by welcoming participants and explaining the goals of NIPN.

The webinar was then moderated by Professor James Warner, Research Coordinator and Head of Eastern and Southern Africa Office, IFPRI.

Dr. Namukolo Covic, ILRI's Director General Representative in Ethiopia, delivered her presentation, highlighting the challenges Ethiopia faces in the areas of diet, health, and the environment.



Dr. Namukolo describes the next steps that could be taken after the United Nations Food System Summit (UNFSS) applauds some key plan actions. She explains the importance of investing generously in food system transformation, diversifying the food basket, improving livelihoods, and investing in long-term solutions across the food system: such as crops, livestock, market value chain development, environment, and climate. She emphasized the importance of investing in synergy.

She also discusses the importance of transforming at scale by investing in policies and programs that create an important environment for action, citing opportunities for these actions such as the recently launched Ethiopian Food-Based Dietary Guidelines, the Seqota Declaration expansion phase, and the seed systems digital platform.

According to her, Ethiopia has a good enabling environment for food system transformation, and the policy environment is quite favorable. Nonetheless, there must be a monitoring action from the point of production to the point of consumption. She also emphasized the importance of the private sector in the transformation of the

food system to push the system forward in a collaborative and synergy.

Therein, having a shared vision is one way to align efforts to achieve better results through working hand to hand in future endeavor.

Dr. Mulugeta Teamir, Food science, technology, and engineering, Senior nutrition-sensitive agriculture (NSA) advisor for the Federal Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Alive and Thrive, stated that nutrition-sensitive agriculture is one approach that aims to ensure the country's food security.



This strategy promotes variety, appropriate, and nutritious food to meet dietary needs. He stated that the MOA is working to include nutrition security in the revised MOA policy. Dr. Mulugeta mentioned one of the most important points to consider, which is, the recycling and recirculation of waste foods. He advised industries to invest in it to attribute their contribution to transforming the agenda of food system in Ethiopia.

There was a lively Q&A session. The webinar was attended by 67 people in total.

In collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the National Information Platform for Nutrition (NiPN)/Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) organized a three-day training on the Lives Saved Tool (LiST) for researchers and programmers in Ethiopia. The training is based on how the Lives Saved Tool (LiST) can help to generate evidence from available interventions that will be used and to evaluate the impact of already implemented interventions to inform policymakers by generating the most effective interventions in terms of cost, coverage, lives saved and undernutrition cases averted.

However, the available intervention evidence in various nutrition programs in Ethiopia necessitates advanced specific skills and capacities for analysis in order to provide evidence-based decision-making and policy directions for nutrition program implementing sectors in Ethiopia.

Thus, building the analytical skills and capacities of EPHI staff and other stakeholders to use the existing data collected to avert stunting, wasting, underweight, and anemia using LiST software at the program level in Ethiopia over the last five to ten years is critical. Hence this training on the Lives Saved Tool (LiST) is planned to increase the skills and the capacity of researchers and program implementers to use the current existing nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive intervention program efficacies undertaken in Ethiopia for their further utilization and recommendation in policy and program level for decision-makers. Using the current dataset, it is believed that LiST is used to estimate the number of lives saved and undernutrition cases averted by the most effective interventions in terms of cost and coverage.

In general, a LiST is a valuable tool that assists researchers in strategic planning and effective intervention measurement.

Accordingly, the training is designed to provide researchers and programmers with a thorough understanding of the LiST software and to familiarize them with the skills required to perform the advanced level statistical analysis in order to estimate the impact of the existing interventions on nutritional indicators over time.

Prof. James Warner of IFPRI provided the training in both theoretical and practical exercises.

Ato Muluken Moges, director of the EPHI plan,

monitoring and evaluation directorate and one of the trainees stated "The training is critical in three areas. It is useful as a planning directorate in estimating the cost of an intervention and also in allocating a reasonable budget."

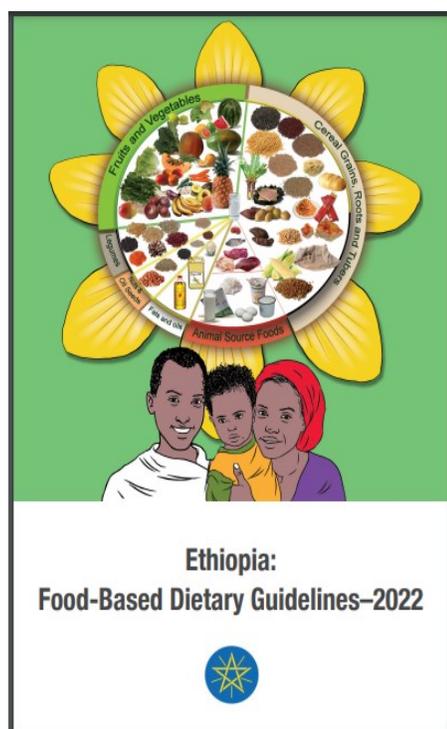


The LiST training also aids in the transition of the traditional planning system to a scientific and evidence-based system.

Ato Kebede Mamo of the ministry of health (MOH) Seqota Declaration (SD) unit emphasized the importance of the training, saying, "As an advisor, it helps me to ease my tasks on monitoring and evaluation as well as to select impactful and meaningful interventions. Previously, through the software-SD evaluated the performance of its innovation phase and moved on expanding its intervention from 40 to 240 woredas. During this time, I was briefly acquainted with the LiST, and now this training allows me to better understand what the LiST is. The skills and resources obtained during the training can also be used to conduct operational research, as well as for strategic planning and forecasting. I would suggest that other relevant sectors be included in such training."

The Ethiopia FBDGs; A Game Changer Solution To Transform The Ethiopian Food System

Contributed By Dawit Alemayehu



Ethiopia's economy is dependent on agriculture, which accounts for 40 percent of the growth domestic product (GDP), 80 percent of exports, and an estimated 75 percent of the country's workforce (<https://www.usaid.gov/ethiopia/agriculture-and-food-security>).

Even though Ethiopia produces a variety of food items, the degree of consuming nutritious food in everyday diets is very low. It is very well known that the dietary habits of Ethiopians vary according to the culture, religion, economic status, lifestyle, and attitude of the population. The production and usage of different food groups is not very much introduced to the larger population and hence the dietary habits remain unscientific and traditional.

Dietary habits can be affected by urbanization, economic and population growth, lifestyle, and climate change. Ethiopia is facing the triple burden of malnutrition; that are undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and the growing problem of overnutrition /overweight, and obesity/. The problem touches the lives of the larger public in every aspect; be it health, educational achievement, and the production and food safety of food items in the agricultural sector. Hence, assessing the correlation between a healthy diet and its direct impact on health, education, and agriculture will be of optimal significance to understand the situation.

In recent years, there has been increasing evidence reflecting that poor nutrition and health affect children's ability to learn. The 2013 Ethiopia Cost of Hunger study estimated that Ethiopia is losing about 16.5% of its GDP due to undernutrition. In addition, 16% of primary grade repetitions were associated with stunting. School grade repetitions are costly to families, the education system, and the national economy because of the additional resources spent on the repeated years of schooling. In Ethiopia, the annual economic cost of school repetitions associated with 'childhood undernutrition' was estimated at 400 million Ethiopian birr (ETB), or 8 million USD.

Despite there having been sustained growth and developments in agriculture, Ethiopia still ranks among food-insecure countries where millions suffer from various forms of under-nutrition. The underlying causes of food insecurity include unavailability, inaccessibility, and consumption patterns characterized by limited diet diversity and inadequate access to nutrient-dense and safe foods, as well as sustainability over time. Even households with access to sufficient nutritious food still suffer from poor nutritional status because of poor dietary practices leading to different forms of malnutrition.

To tackle the abovementioned problems, the government of Ethiopia endorses a National Food and Nutrition Policy which indicated the need for developing a tool; Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs). Hence, improving the diet quality of the population will support reducing the risk of malnutrition and related Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

If so, what is **FBDGs**? It is a set of context-specific simple advisory guidelines based on sound evidence that attempts to respond to a country's public health and nutrition priorities, food production and consumption patterns, socio-cultural influences, and related factors. (FAO, 2021)

Food-Based Dietary Guideline is among the identified game-changing solution which is in accordance with the Ethiopian food system transformation agenda for improved nutrition literacy and diet quality characterized by increased diversity, safe and nutritious foods in the appropriate amount suitable for the local food culture. FBDGs drive a significant shift in the existing food system. FBDGs address multifactorial issues related to diet and health. Globally, over 100 countries have FBDGs and only 7 African countries have FBDGs. Ethiopia will be the eighth one. *(continued to P7)*

Beginning in 2021, the EPHI Food Science and Nutrition Research Directorate is leading a nationwide Food and Nutrition Strategy (FNS) baseline survey. Starting from its initiation, the survey is making good progress, and data were collected from 9 regions and the data management tasks are continuously progressing well to generate evidence for national FNS.

In order to cover all-regional states, the survey is currently being expanded to include the remaining two regions, Afar and Benishangul Gumuz that were not addressed in the first phase of data collection due to the security situations that occurred in the respective regions. However, the Tigray region will not be covered due to security concerns up to date. Furthermore, the data management tasks were completed in collaboration with the research and data teams of the FNS. Now, the first draft report is being worked on and will be completed in a few weeks. In this national endeavor, NIPN Ethiopia has provided technical and financial support for this

NIPN phase-I was concluded in 2021, and preparations were begun in advance to ensure a smooth transition to phase II. As a result, the NIPN team worked on phase II project proposal writing, along with the budget. So project proposal and no-cost extension documents are now completed. Regular meetings were held with key NIPN partners, IFPRI, GIZ, and C4N. Each party's roles and responsibilities have been defined and agreed upon.

The project document has been submitted to the contracting department at GIZ and we expect that it will be approved by all implementing parties soon.

On May 2022, a joint discussion is planned. Members of the NIPN technical advisory bodies, including IFPRI Addis Ababa, C4N, and GIZ, will meet to discuss the smooth transition from NIPN phase one to NIPN phase two.

The Ethiopia FBDGs; A Game Changer Solution ..continued from P6

The promotion of a healthy diet needs to be supported with scientific evidence and hence a guideline is one approach to use as promotional material/ guide. The goal of FBDGs is to reduce malnutrition and diet-related public health problems in the country by promoting a healthy diet among different population groups.

It objectively provides dietary recommendations for the Ethiopian population 2 years and older for increased diet quality including diversity and food safety for optimal health as well as promote broad food system actions supporting diet quality being sensitive to sustainability. With the lead of the EPHI, three sector ministries; ministry of health (MoH), ministry of agriculture (MoA), ministry of education (MoE), and different nutrition partners developed the first-ever FBDGs for Ethiopia. This main document of the guideline has five sections that provide practical dietary advice through scientifically proven 11 key messages designed to foster improved dietary patterns and public nutrition literacy. These 11 key messages were developed following the research findings and analysis of the existing data. This document is for use by the technical staff in different sectors (health, agriculture,

and others).

FBDGs can be used as a policy and programmatic tool, an educational and capacity development tool that can shape the food environment, by setting standards for foods offered in public settings (schools, workplaces, hospitals, prisons, social canteens, and restaurants).

The targets of this guideline are the general population over 2 years in agrarian and pastoral settings, consumers, industries, schools, media, government sectors, NGOs and UN organizations, Universities, and research organizations.

As a way forward, multi-sectoral engagement is highly needed for the successful implementation of the guideline. The three front-line ministries as well as stakeholder partners should take their indispensable role in the contextualization, translation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of this guideline.

You can access the guideline using this link: <https://www.nipn.eph.gov.et/node/238>



the first NIPN webinar in 2022 is conducted on March 31. Increasing multi-sectoral engagement will be prioritized during the year's activities, which will include participation via a variety of means.

The NIPN visibility plan also works to communicate beneficial knowledge and research outputs accompanied by different means of promotional activities.

As we enter the second quarter of the year, we hope to achieve the highest level of achievement in the yearly plan.

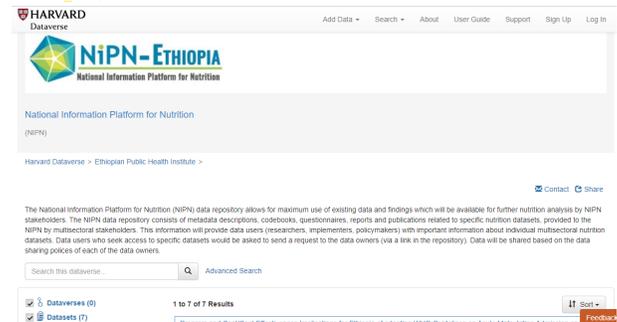
Thank you!

NIPN Data Repository As a good Source For Data Utilization

The National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN)-Ethiopia is entirely working to generate nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific evidence for national policy makers, programmers, researchers and decision makers. To execute data and evidence for the users, NIPN has its own web-based data repositories that should be easily accessed by every user for their study purpose in Ethiopia and elsewhere.

The NIPN Website contains policy and strategy documents (i.e., food and nutrition policy, National nutrition program, nutrition sensitive agriculture strategy, national school health and nutrition strategy, Infant formula and Follow-up formula directive, Health sector Transformation plan, etc. Refer, <https://www.nipn.eph.gov.et>. Furthermore, it contains NIPN research briefs, research reports and NIPN project documents. And also, NIPN data repository allows for maximum use of existing data and findings which will be available for further nutrition data analysis by NIPN stakeholders, implementers, policy makers and researchers.

The NIPN data repository consists of metadata descriptions, codebooks, questionnaires, reports and publications related to specific nutrition datasets, provided to the NIPN by multisectoral stakeholders. Therefore, to access all such evidences, we kindly invite the users to visit the NIPN website shown here [National Information Platform for Nutrition \(harvard.edu\)](http://www.nipn.eph.gov.et). We also encourage you to circulate this message to your colleagues to maximize the data use culture and share resources found in the data repository.



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