

## The NIPN Advisory Committee Meeting Met in December 20 to Discuss NIPN Progress

### Newsletter Spotlight

Message from the Coordinator 2

### News

Advisory Committee Meeting 1

MER SC Workshop 7

NIPN @ Global Gathering 3

NIPN Shares Experience 4

NIPN @ ARM 4

Articles- Selenium Deficiency 5-6

Training News 9

NIPN Webinar 8

Short updates 12



The NIPN Advisory Committee met bi-annually to evaluate NIPN performance and give directions to the team. The second AC meeting of 2022 was held on December 20, 2022, at the Elilly Hotel.

The Meeting started with a welcoming remark by the AC chair, Dr. Meseret Zelalem, and she addressed the fact that nutrition has become a national agenda. She emphasized the significance and power of data for any intervention in reinforcing the decision-making process by reiterating, “Data should be the center of gravity.”

After the welcoming remarks, Dr. Masresha Tessema, Director of FSNRD, and the Secretary of the AC went through the previous meeting action points, which were finally endorsed by the AC members.

Dr. Aregash Samuel, NIPN Coordinator, also gave an overview of phase one’s key achievements, lessons learned, and challenges faced. She also explains the main focus areas of NIPN Phase 2, which will last for two and a half years.

The AC members appreciated the NIPN phase one performance and underlined the need to keep up the best experiences and ensure sustainability, which should be given proper attention.

As NIPN received requests from different sectors to respond to policy relevant questions, one request came from one of the top decision-making body of the government. And thus, the status and preliminary findings of this policy request, which is related to oil consumption, was presented to the AC members. The AC members reflected on the preliminary findings and recommended key points that should be added to the assessment.

The NIPN entered its second phase in July 2022 and was officially launched in October. And NIPN would like to assess the uptake of NIPN outputs by policymakers and program implementers. Based on this interest, an end-user interview was in progress, *(Continued to P13)*



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

*“NIPN Ethiopia is committed to working hard and putting a strong emphasis on the sustainability issue and gender inclusion during the course of the second phase of the project's 2.5-year lifespan.”*

# Happy New Year!!!

Greetings from NIPN Ethiopia!!

NIPN Ethiopia wishes you a Happy New Year!!

We frequently come to the conclusion that 2022 has been a productive year as we say goodbye.

Very significant NIPN phase II-related events occurred last year. In October 2022, NIPN phase one was completed, and the global launch of NIPN phase two was formally announced. The first phase of the NIPN was quite an experience for the Ethiopian team; defining the nature of the project, revising the log frame, adapting eight global tools, and organizing annual plans according to the project's goals were all excellent starting points for achieving the desired goals. Numerous accomplishments were made as of May 2018 as part of the NIPN's initial phase. The primary task was to establish the NIPN at EPHI. The real project implementation was accomplished by establishing the NIPN team. To get a strong performance, NIPN Ethiopia put a lot of effort into it, and we succeeded commendably. And NIPN Ethiopia is rated as one of the best among the global NIPN implementing countries, which enabled us to share best experiences for the NIPN countries. We have also begun the phase one evaluation process. Universities were invited to take part

in the phase one evaluation process. The results, we sincerely hope, will be very interesting.

As a project implementer, EPHI is eager to assess how well the policy recommendations of the NIPN are being utilized by policymakers. So, an end-user interview is in progress to assess NIPN's impact.

As previously stated, NIPN operates as a multi-sectoral platform with the goal of serving as a nutrition data platform by establishing a data repository. And NIPN also assisted different multi-sectoral interventions during 2022. Therefore, NIPN hired three consultants for its commitment to promoting a multi-sectoral approach, for three government ministries. We sincerely hope that hiring these experts would lead to the desired cooperation among the major sectors.

One of NIPN's greatest accomplishments in 2022 was the policy question (PQ's) timely response, which was requested about oil consumption and asked from the top government policy makers. This helped to establish NIPN's reputation for timely responses and earned the trust of the public. This year, two additional policy questions; fortification and bio-fortification, were also answered.

As one key engagement, the NIPN Ethiopia team participated in the 4th NIPN Global Gathering in Mombasa, Kenya, from October 4-6, 2022, where the experience from NIPN-Ethiopia was highlighted as best practice.

NIPN is better recognized in 2022 than at any other time. By participating in several events, NIPN increased its visibility. The nutrition financing workshop offered it a chance to share its findings with attendees, and the University of Gondar also asked the FNSRD and NIPN team for a scientific talk during its "PhD week" event. Additionally, the EPHI/NIPN exhibition stand was visited by many partners at the annual review meeting (ARM) workshop of the ministry of health in Hawasa, where NIPN also took part.

In general, finishing phase one with good achievements give us more energy to move to the next phase. We have greater energy to accomplish more. NIPN Ethiopia is committed to working hard and putting a strong emphasis on the sustainability issue and gender inclusion during the course of the second phase of the project's 2.5-year lifespan.

The New Year is here now. And as usual, we committed ourselves to bringing positive and impactful results in phase two.

Once again I wish you a joyful New Year!!

The NIPN global gathering met each year to discuss performances, exchange experiences among implementing countries, and strengthen the country's participation in an organized manner.

This year, the 4<sup>th</sup> NIPN Global Gathering was held from October 4-6, 2022, in Mombasa, Kenya with the theme "Accelerating for Results". The Meeting was conducted in a hybrid format in Kenya Hub and Ivory Coast hub. Five NIPN implementing countries were represented in Kenya Hub (Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kenya, Lao PDR, and Uganda), and three countries (Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Niger) in Ivory Coast Hub. Four NIPN Ethiopia team members, one IFPRI team member, and a GIZ advisor to NIPN Ethiopia attended the meeting in Mombasa, Kenya.



The meeting was intended to evaluate country objectives, identify good experiences and lessons learned, and clarify key steps that we need to leave toward NIPN's sustainability.

During the opening, it was well articulated by speakers that the issue of nutrition is a priority and the NIPN projects contributed significant outputs to mitigate malnutrition issues, it was also reiterated that now is a crucial time to address malnutrition, effective planning is good for better achievement, applying effective M&E is necessary to prioritize goals. It is also said that the NIPN-implementing countries need to continue planning and accelerating their actions and make sure of the sustainability of NIPN.

It was mentioned as a challenge, that because policy analysis takes time, the results become outdated before reaching programmers and policy makers, and the results are not communicated well to the policy makers and program planners. Reaching out to policy makers and gaining their attention is a major challenge for NIPN implementing countries, and the less attention given to nutrition, the greater the challenge. It is also mentioned that the scope of NIPN should be limited to and in line with the capacity and objective of NIPN.

NIPN Ethiopia experience was presented in the NIPN country examples.

The 4<sup>th</sup> NIPN Global Gathering was attended by 27 participants in Ivory Coast, 55 in Kenya, and more than 20 online (virtual).

Following the NIPN Global Gathering, the NIPN Phase II was officially launched virtually on 11 October 2022.

On November 10, 2022, representatives from the Somalia Government Nutrition Department arrived at the Ethiopian Public Health Institute's (EPHI) compound and met with the Food Science and Nutrition Research Directorate (FSNRD) team to exchange experiences.

Six participants from the Somalia team, including the head of the Somalia Government's Ministry of Health (MOH) Nutrition Department, nutrition officers, Somalian SUN academia coordinators, and a Geneva SUN advisor, took part in this experience-sharing visit. Participants from the FSNRD/NIPN, MOH Ethiopia, Seqota Declaration project coordinators, and implementation advisors also took part in this event.

The key tasks performed in NIPN Phase 1.0 were described by the NIPN Project Coordinator, Dr. Aregash Samuel. She highlights the key learning experiences for the Somalian team. She also went over the main tasks that will be carried out in the second phase of the project.

In addition to the NIPN presentation, the Seqouta Declaration resource tracking and partnership management activities and the SUN academia network activities were presented, followed by a lively discussion. As a conclusion of the experience-sharing program, the Food Science and Nutrition Laboratory of the FSNRD of EPHI was visited by the Somalia Nutrition Team.



## NIPN Ethiopia at the 24<sup>th</sup> Health Sector ARM



NIPN Ethiopia participated in an exhibition at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Review Meeting (ARM) organized by the Ministry of Health (MOH). The meeting was held in Hawassa from October 20-21, 2022, with the theme “Equitable and quality health service for all”. The Annual Review Meeting welcomed over 450 government sectors, members of the House of Peoples Representatives, representatives from the office of the prime minister, representatives from different health institutions, health and nutrition partners, and different stakeholders. The meeting was opened by H.E. Dr. Lia Tadesse, minister of health, and the president of Sidama regional state, Ato Desta Lodamo.

NIPN Ethiopia participated as one of the exhibitors along with EPHI colleagues

and exhibited different publications, policy and issue briefs, and brochures. Briefs and brochures were distributed during this big event. Around 450 participants attended the meeting and visited the EPHI/NIPN booth.

A lot of dignitaries, including H.E. Dr. Lia Tadesse, the state minister of MOH, Dr. Dereje Duguma, Ato Desta Lodamo, president of the Sidama regional state, the Director General of EPHI, Dr. Mesay Hailu, renowned researchers, and influential personalities exhibited the EPHI-NIPN booth, and explanations were given to visitors.



# Selenium Deficiency is Widespread and Spatially Dependent in Ethiopia

Contributed By;

Adamu Belay, Edward J. M. Joy, Christopher Chagumaira, Dilnesaw Zerfu, E. Louise Ander, Scott D. Young, Elizabeth H. Bailey, R. Murray Lark, Martin R. Broadley and Dawd Gashu

Micronutrients are required in small amounts in the diet and are essential for maintaining human health. Selenium (Se) is an important trace element for human health and livestock productivity [1,2]. Deficiency of Se mainly occurs due to inadequate intake of the nutrient from the diet. The deficiency can result in impaired expression or activity of Se-containing enzymes such as glutathione peroxidase 3 (GPx3) important for antioxidant function, and iodothyronine deiodinase (IDI) which is important for normal thyroid function [3,4]. Globally, human Se status is highly variable, mainly due to the influence of soil types on the Se content of crops, suggesting the need to identify areas of deficiency to design targeted interventions. Data on population Se status are largely unavailable in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Ethiopia, despite previous studies indicating the possibility of widespread Se deficiency. Serum Se concentration of a nationally representative sample of the Ethiopian population was determined, and these observed values were combined with a spatial statistical model to predict and map the Se status of populations across the country

The study used archived serum samples ( $n = 3269$ ) from the 2015 Ethiopian National Micronutrient Survey (ENMS). The ENMS was a cross-sectional survey of young and school-age children, women, and men. Serum Se concentration was measured using inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICPMS). The national median (Q1, Q3) serum Se concentration was 87.7 (56.7, 123.0)  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ . Serum Se concentration differed between regions, ranging from a median (Q1, Q3) of 54.6 (43.1, 66.3)  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$  in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region to 122.0 (105, 141)  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$  in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region and the Afar Region. Overall, 35.5% of the population were Se deficient, defined as serum Se  $< 70 \mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ .

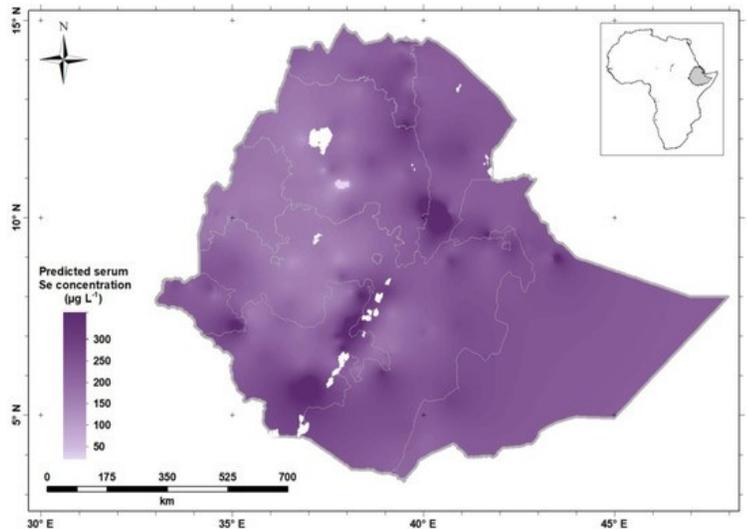


Figure 1. Predicted serum Se concentration (the mean of the prediction distribution) in women of reproductive age in Ethiopia.

A geostatistical analysis showed that there was marked spatial dependence in Se status up to distances of 200 km. The greatest serum Se concentrations (darker shade of purple) were observed along the Rift Valley of Ethiopia and in the North-East and Eastern parts of Ethiopia, including the Afar, Somali, and Harari regions, and the Dire Dawa City administrations. Selenium status is low (lighter shade of purple) in the North-western and Western parts of Ethiopia, including the Benshangul-Gumuz Region and large parts of the Amhara and Oromia regions, including in highland areas on either side of the Rift Valley.

The higher concentration of Se along the Rift Valley may be due to the presence of different lakes, which in Ethiopia include the Abaya, Chamo, Zeway, Shala, Koka, Langano, Abijatta, and Hawassa Lakes. (Continued to P11)

## Data Gaps Exist to Identify Factors that Drive Decline in Acute Malnutrition: A NIPN analysis



Contributed By  
Meron Girma (PhD)

Ethiopia loses between 158 and 230 million US dollars (USD) annually due to wasting. The cost of supplies and the human resources needed to treat acute malnutrition accounts for more than 50% of these costs. Consequently, the focus of wasting management should expand to include prevention as well as treatment to ameliorate its consequences. However, the etiology of wasting is poorly understood and gaps exist in our understanding of factors and interventions that can be implemented in the Ethiopian context.

Our analysis aimed to describe the patterns of acute malnutrition and identify factors that have contributed to the change in acute malnutrition among children under five years of age between 2000-2016. We used data from the four rounds of the nationally and regionally representative Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey (2000, 2005, 2011, and 2016). Wasting declined by 4.4% between 2000 and 2016. The prevalence of diarrhea, a risk factor for acute malnutrition, significantly declined (14% reduction) as well. Our findings show that the sharpest increase in acute malnutrition occurs from birth to six months of age.

The difference in wasting prevalence between the poorest and wealthiest households has decreased over time, despite the fact that economically disadvantaged households still have a high frequency of wasting. Urban-rural disparities in wasting prevalence, however, were less pronounced. Factors that were associated with acute malnutrition differed across different age groups (0-5 months, 6-23 months, and 24-59 months), highlighting the need to design and implement age-specific interventions. Among children aged 0-5 months, perceived low weight at birth, recent diarrhea, exclusive breastfeeding, and access to basic water service were significant predictors of acute malnutrition. Perceived low weight at birth and diarrhea continued to be significant predictors of acute malnutrition among children aged 6-23 months. Access to basic sanitation facilities, receiving at least four antenatal care visits, wealth, month of data collection, and maternal education were additional risk factors that were associated with acute malnutrition in this age group. Similar to our findings in children aged 6-23 months, among children aged 24-59 months, perceived low weight at birth, recent diarrhea, receiving four or more antenatal care visits, wealth, and maternal education were significant predictors of acute malnutrition.

Changes in perceived low weight at birth and recent diarrhea accounted for some of the declines in acute malnutrition. An improvement in the wealth score contributed to 15 to 30 % of the total decline in acute malnutrition. Reduction in diarrhea and an increase in birth weight contributed to 15% and 7% of the decline in acute malnutrition, respectively. A key finding of our analysis was that more than 50% of the improvement in acute malnutrition was not accounted for by the change in commonly measured risk factors.

This finding highlights the need for more longitudinal studies that measure individual-level nutritional status over time to elucidate causal pathways and identify preventive interventions. Such data would enable us to take into account the relationship between risk factors over time and capture the seasonal patterns in exposure to risk factors. More evidence can also be generated by collecting information on additional risk factors in cross-sectional studies and implementing well-designed program evaluations. Our findings also emphasize the importance of interventions to reduce low birth weight, diarrhea, and interventions that address income inequities to prevent acute malnutrition.

### Source

1. Girma M, Hussein A, Baye K, Samuel A, van Zyl C, Tessema M, Chitekwe S, Laillou A. Drivers of change in weight-for-height among children under 5 years of age in Ethiopia: Risk factors and data gaps to identify risk factors. *Matern Child Nutr* 2022:e13392.



The National Food and Nutrition Program Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Steering Committee (MER-SC) met every quarter to monitor progress and discuss challenges. Assisted by the technical and financial support of NIPN, the fourth MER-SC quarterly workshop was held on December 22, 2022, at Adama.

Dr. Aregash Samuel, NIPN coordinator, welcomed the participants and urged the MER-SC members to contribute at their best level for the successful implementation of the committee plans.

The following agenda items were discussed by the MER-SC members:

- Multi-sectors 2015 Ethiopian Fiscal Year (EFY) six-month progress report.
- The FNS implementation monitoring and performance assessment final protocol
- Evaluation of nutrition data financing in Ethiopia
- Ethiopian Food Composition Table (FCT) update: progress
- Overview of NIPN phase 2: Milestones and expected achievements

Six sectors delivered their 2015 EFY progress reports: the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC), the One WASH program from the Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE), the Ministry of

Trade and Regional Integration (MOTRI), and the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI).

The chair of the MER-SC, EPHI, presented the institute's performance, summarizing the key activities done in coordinating the MER-SC meeting and evidence generation. The participants were informed that the MER SC ToR had been revised and that the annual plan had been developed.

As NIPN entered its second phase, an overview of phase two, which includes additional issues such as gender, and the expected achievements of the second phase were presented by the NIPN coordinator, Dr. Aregash Samuel.

A lively discussion was observed during the workshop. On the next day, NIPN organized partnership management training for MER-SC members as per the training needs assessment that was done earlier.



## A NIPN Webinar on Food Based Dietary Guideline Was Kicked off in October



The NIPN webinars are very well known for bringing timely topics and hosting lively discussions in order to connect researchers.



Hence, the timely topic that was selected for the third webinar of NIPN was the Food-Based Dietary Guideline (FBDG). In Ethiopia, malnutrition that occurs due to inadequate nutrient intake is highly prevalent, especially among women of reproductive age and children. Reducing the risk of malnutrition and related non-communicable diseases through the utilization of diversified diet interventions is one of the important interventions to consider nowadays. And dietary diversity is the focus of many countries in the world, as well as nutritionists.

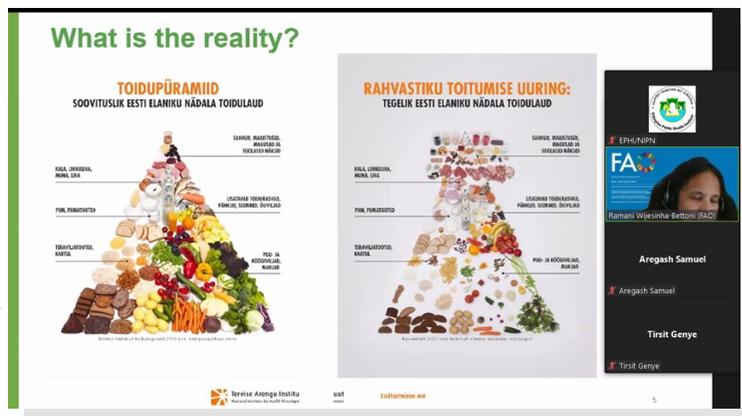
To reduce malnutrition, improving diet quality is one of the recommendations suggested by researchers. For a better implementation of this recommended act, the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) that will support the transition to healthier diets are getting significant attention.

Considering this fact, globally, over 100 countries have FBDGs, and only eight African countries have FBDGs. Through the use of FBDGs as a policy and programmatic tool, as well as an education and capacity development tool, FBDGs are helpful in promoting multi-sectoral engagement to promote food and nutrition. Additionally, FBDGs are expected to shape the food environment by setting standards for foods offered in public settings such as schools, workplaces, hospitals, prisons, social canteens, and restaurants. Recently, Ethiopia launched the Ethiopian Food-Based Dietary Guideline (FBDG) in March 2022.

Thus, NIPN selected this timely topic to highlight the significance of FBDGs by explaining selected FBDGs from some countries' experiences. Thus, the selected webinar topic was "A Snapshot of Food-Based Dietary Guidelines Implementation in Selected Countries," which was held on October 27, 2022.

The Webinar was opened with a welcome address by Dr. Aregash Samuel, NIPN Ethiopia National Coordinator and Senior Researcher at the Food Science and Nutrition Research Directorate at EPHI.

After the welcome address, Dr. Ramani Wijesinha-Bettoni, a Nutrition Officer in the Food and Nutrition Division of the FAO, Rome, presented the issue of FBDG by explaining selected FBDGs from some countries' experiences to the audience.



Two panelists, Dr. Mulugeta Teamir, Senior Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Advisor at the Ministry of Agriculture, and Dawit Alemayehu, Associate Researcher at the Food Science and Nutrition Directorate at EPHI, also reflected on their views on the significance of country-specific FBDG and presented the Ethiopian FBDG. A lively discussion was seen during the webinar, and 58 participants attended.

You can get the presentations and the Q&A at the NIPN Website: <https://www.nipn.ephi.gov.et/node/255>

### NIPN Ethiopia Organized Training for Media Professionals



The media possess great power and are a successful tool for health and nutrition advocacy. Most research findings that are extremely important to the general public, it is believed, must be made public. And the media is an excellent medium for disseminating health researches to the general public.

Taking this into account, the NIPN Ethiopia organized training for Media professionals for the third time. The aim of the training was to engage the media in health and nutrition-sensitive reporting. The two days of training covered key issues related to health communication, which included topics such as health emergency reporting, Nutrition, and Environment sensitive reporting.

During the opening of the training, NIPN Ethiopia coordinator Dr. Aregash Samuel welcomed the participants and explained that the training was organized to work together with journalists on health reporting. She said that working together for a common goal is essential to bringing beneficial results, and the training is one way of interacting with each other. Ato Yordanos Alebachew, Deputy Director of the Public Relations Directorate at MOH, said that the health interventions strategy of Ministry of Health (MOH), which is based on prevention and health development, needs advocacy, and in this regard, the role of the media is immense. He emphasized that MOH is planning to work aggressively with the media in the second health plan, Health Sector Development Plan (HSDP-2).

Dr. Ammar Barba, Chief of staff at EPHI's Director General's Office, also stated that EPHI is a historical institution aged 100 years and with a mandate to reduce health challenges through research-based interventions. The training was organized to figure out how the media and EPHI could work toward a common goal by respecting media ethics. He also appreciated the role and great contribution of the media during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The training discussed and entertained the main challenges in information flow and health reporting. During the discussion, it is mentioned that it is the responsibility of EPHI to avail timely information, assign focal persons to respond to media queries, and handle media queries with the proper attention from higher officials. On the other hand, the media is expected to consider the sensitivity of health outbreaks and understand health and nutrition-sensitive reporting by following proper ethical procedures. *(Continued to P10)*

The Director General of EPHI, Dr. Mesay Hailu, attended the discussion and promised to solve the challenges raised by the media.



This training provided an opportunity for the EPHI to promote five of its directorates while also allowing for good interaction with the media professionals.

The two-day training was given from December 8-9, 2022, at Adama and was given by trainers from the Addis Ababa University (AAU), Building Resilience in Ethiopia (BRE), and EPHI directorates. The training was attended by 17 journalists from various public and private media outlets. An additional 29 participants from different EPHI directorates attended the training.

### Partnership Management Training Was Given to MER SC Members on December 23, 2022, at Adama.

As EPHI is the chair of the National Food and Nutrition Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Steering Committee (MER-SC), the members met each quarter to review their performance in nutrition interventions. For the past few years, NIPN has been technically and financially supporting the activity of this multi-sectoral committee to promote multi-sectoral engagement in nutrition issues.

This year, NIPN organized training for the MER-SC members based on a need assessment that was collected earlier. The training was delivered by Mr. Melaku Bayable.

The training highlighted basic partnership management mechanisms, and shed light on what partnership and partnership management mean, their processes, partnership building mechanisms, the challenges seen in a multi-sectoral approach, what stakeholder management means, and also gave



an overview of what the project environment looks like.

The NIPN Ethiopia coordinator, Dr. Aregash Samuel, addressed the audience by delivering the following message “As a member of the MER-SC, we would like you to go to your respective sectors and analyze what kind of partnership each sector is engaged in. You need to identify what kind of power, interest, and influence each sector is involved in and identify the need for partners to get the expected outcome.”

About 29 participants from EPHI and different sectors and partners attended the training.

## NIPN Case Study in Multi-sectoral Engagement to be Presented in the Global Webinar

A case study that assesses the NIPN Ethiopia experience in multi-sectoral engagement was organized by the global C4N-NIPN team nutrition expert, Ingo Neu. The case study was conducted by C4N-NIPN Global Support in collaboration with the NIPN/Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) and with support from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

This case study was designed by Capacity for Nutrition -National Information Platforms for Nutrition (C4N-NIPN) with the aim of sharing experiences and lessons learned about the way NIPN in Ethiopia is integrated into the country's multisectoral, multistakeholder mechanisms, and especially to show its involvement in the National Food and Nutrition Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Steering Committee (MER-SC). Selected sectors and international nutrition partners were involved in the interview, and input was collected via virtual meetings.

The case study explores the extent to which the comprehensive and inclusive approach applied in the project's components and its integration in the national multisectoral environment for nutrition enhanced the multisectoral food security and nutrition coordination and collaboration mechanisms of the National Food and Nutrition Strategy (NFNS), the National Nutrition Plan II (NNP II), and the Food and Nutrition Policy (FNP). The case study aims to provide guidance to other NIPN countries on how to leverage this approach to better align NIPN activities (e.g. capacity development, the Policy Question Formulation (PQF) process, data management, and the generation of evidence) for the benefit of national nutrition plans and program implementation in other countries.

This case study will be presented in the global NIPN webinars on January 23, 2023, at 13:00 CET. You can read the full report by clicking here: <https://www.nipn.ephi.gov.et/node/256>



### Selenium Deficiency....Continued from P5

It is likely that the consumption of fish—which is a good dietary source of Se—is greater among groups living near these lakes, as was previously noted in Malawi [5]. In conclusion, selenium deficiency in Ethiopia is widespread, but the risk of Se deficiency is highly spatially dependent. Policies to enhance Se nutrition should target populations in North-West and Western Ethiopia. For more information use this link DOI: 10.3390/nu12061565

**Keywords:** serum selenium; geospatial prediction; glutathione peroxidase 3; iodothyronine deiodinase; Ethiopia

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## Additional Quarterly Updates

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### NIPN Recruited Three Advisors for Sectors

As NIPN is by nature a multi-sectoral platform, it promotes, advocates for, and supports multi-sectoral activities. In this case, NIPN hired three nutrition advisors for three government sectors; the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), and the Ministry of Education (MOE). The three advisors are expected to facilitate the multi-sectoral interaction among sectors and will support any nutrition-related interventions in their respective ministries. They are also assigned to work closely with the NIPN Ethiopia team.

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### NIS-NIPN Collaboration

The NIPN Ethiopia started collaborative activities with the EU-funded Nutrition Information System (NIS), which is hosted by the MOH with the technical support of WHO and UNICEF. WHO, UNICEF, and EPHI-NIPN focal persons formed a team and began the discussion. The EU-NIS-NIPN collaboration discussions were held sequentially, with common goals and areas of partnership identified. The two team members met and identified areas of collaboration. A TOR was developed, and a diary has been started to be filled by both teams. A global team is also involved to facilitate and monitor progress.

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### NIPN End User Interview in Progress

NIPN Ethiopia is conducting an end-user interview to assess the uptake of the evidence briefs by the decision-makers and program implementers. A tool is being developed to assess knowledge output and uptake. In order to do this, five government (MOH, MOA, MOWE, Food, beverage, and pharmaceutical development institute of MOI, MOTRI) sectors and two partners (UNICEF and WHO) were identified as informants and communicated with. So far, four sectors have been approached, and interviews have been conducted. The remaining interviews will be finalized as per the schedule.

On December 20, 2022, preliminary findings were presented to the NIPN Advisory Committee (AC). The assessment is expected to be finalized at the beginning of January 2023.

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### NIPN Phase One Evaluation is in Progress

The NIPN phase one ends in May 2022, and the second phase starts in June 2022. The NIPN team organized transition and operational workshops to foster a smooth transition of the project to the next phase. In order to take lessons from phase one and assess the status of the project, NIPN Ethiopia invited 14 universities to apply for the evaluation grant. Eight universities responded to the appeal. An independent body from EPHI was established to evaluate the concept notes and give the award. The results will be a great opportunity for NIPN to evaluate itself, and upgrade the good lessons, and improve the weaknesses.

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### NIPN Feasibility Study in Progress

Cascading NIPN into one or two regional states is one of the activities planned in phase two. In order to decide which region is appropriate to cascade NIPN, a feasibility study is in progress. An independent consultant is hired and starts the work. The implementation plan was prepared, documents were collected, and regions have been contacted. The feasibility study is expected to give decisive recommendations for NIPN cascading. The consultancy is expected to be finalized within three months.

## AC Meeting ... (continued from P1)



and some of the sectors were interviewed. And thus, the preliminary findings of the NIPN phase one end-user interview assessment were presented to the AC members. Very useful input was collected from the AC members.

The AC chair concluded the meeting by reiterating the points about maximizing strong partnerships and collaboration among nutrition stakeholders. She also stressed that a strong sector/NIPN relationship is important to establish a strong bond, and consistent representation of sectors is also recommended. She also mentioned the importance of adding new partners and actors to AC as well as revising the TOR.

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