

ATI NEWSLETTER



APRIL-JUNE 2024

A quarterly newsletter published by
the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Institute

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the Afar Region Handed Over

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Schools Curricula and Manu-
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for FPCs in Conflict-affected
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REHABILITATING AGRICULTURE IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS



ATI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | APRIL-JUNE-2024



CEO'S NOTE

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

Welcome to ATI's Quarterly Newsletter, covering the period from April to June 2024!

This newsletter consists of key updates on the contribution of the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Institute (ATI) and its strategic partners to drive the transformation of the agriculture sector in Ethiopia.

In this issue, I would like to shed a spotlight on our food security project, the Food Security and Agriculture Rehabilitation Measures in Conflict-Affected Regions of Ethiopia (FARM) project, which aims at rehabilitating agricultural activity and strengthening the seed value chain in conflict-affected areas in northern Ethiopia. This project plays a vital role in restoring agricultural productivity, rebuilding livelihoods, and promoting peace and stability in war-torn regions.

By revitalizing agriculture in the Amhara, Tigray, and Afar regions, the FARM project helps address food insecurity and foster economic recovery. It also contributes to rebuilding social cohesion, creating employment opportunities, and laying the foundation for long-term peace and development.

I hope you enjoy the story of Asiya Mohamed, who is one of the beneficiaries of the FARM project.

Thank you for your continued support to the ATI.

Mandefro Nigussie
Chief Executive Officer

**Innovations to help
our country grow!**



Strengthening Partnership to Transform the Ethiopian Food Systems and Nutrition

Joint Meeting Between Development Partners Group and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on Transforming Ethiopia's Food Systems and Nutrition

May 13, 2024, Addis Ababa



The development partners group and the Government of Ethiopia pledged to strengthen collaborations in driving Ethiopia's food systems and nutrition transformation in a joint meeting held on May 13, 2024, at the Ministry of Finance in Addis Ababa. The ATI, the secretariat of the Ethiopian Food Systems Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee, facilitated the event.

The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the need for greater synergy and operational partnerships to revolutionize food systems and enhance nutrition on a larger scale across all regions. During the event, the revised Ethiopian Food Systems and Nutrition Synthesis Report was presented, followed by a detailed discussion on how to mobilize resources and collaborate more effectively to achieve the transformation of Ethiopia's food systems.

Furthermore, a call was made to government officials, development partners, and researchers to embrace collective responsibility and foster innovation at every stage by taking a nutrition-centric approach with the goal of ensuring that the food system nourishes not only the body but also

millions of minds. In addition, promoting equitable and inclusive development that leaves no one behind to ensure the involvement of smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and agripreneurs is of paramount importance in all endeavors related to food systems.

The meeting concluded by highlighting partnership as the driving force behind the transformation of Ethiopia's food system. Recognizing its power and potential, a renewed and strategic partnership has been called for, with the aim of bringing about lasting change.





The Agricultural Transformation Strategy for the Afar Region Handed Over

The ATI handed over the Afar Regional State's Agricultural Transformation Strategy, co-developed with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), in a colorful ceremony held on May 19, 2024, in Semera. The event was attended by high-level officials, including H.E. Haji Awol Arba, President of the Afar Regional State; H.E. Dr. Girma Amente, Minister of Agriculture; H.E. Eng. Aysha Mohammed, the former Minister of Irrigation and Lowlands; and Dr. Mandefro Nigussie, CEO of the ATI.

Agriculture is the primary livelihood for the Afar region, with 80% of the population engaged in livestock production. Despite its potential, the region's agricultural productivity is significantly below capacity due to various reasons, such as poor practices and insufficient extension services. To address these challenges and fully utilize the region's potential, a comprehensive agricultural strategy has been developed by the MoA and the ATI.

In his opening remarks, H.E. Haji Awol Arba highlighted the strategy's crucial role in achieving food security and sustainable development in the Afar region. Dr. Girma Amente, on his part,

underscored the importance of implementing the strategy effectively, urging coordinated efforts from universities, research centers, the private sector, and development partners. He also emphasized that ownership and leadership of the strategy should rest with the regional state and its various sectors at different levels.

The strategy focuses on 13 key thematic areas across livestock, crop, and natural resources sub-sectors. Its development followed a four-phased approach: assessing the current state, identifying and prioritizing challenges, identifying interventions, and planning implementation.

On this occasion, participants expressed their appreciation for the ATI and its leadership in developing this well-organized strategy. Following the handover of the document, Dr. Mandefro Nigussie reiterated ATI's commitment to do whatever it takes to translate the strategy into action through enhanced linkage and coordination.

To date, the ATI has developed and handed over Agricultural Transformation Strategies for Oromia, Somali, and Southwest Ethiopia regions.





Poultry Distribution to Smallholder Farmers in the Amhara and Tigray Regions

The Food Security and Agriculture Rehabilitation Measures in Conflict-affected Regions of Ethiopia (FARM) project has undertaken activities to support smallholder farmers in the Amhara and Tigray regions. This effort involves the procurement and distribution of improved 45-day-old pullets, with the Koekoek breed designated for the Amhara region and the Sasso breed for the Tigray region. This support falls under the first component of the FARM project, aimed at restoring agricultural activity in conflict-affected areas in the northern part of the country.

In the Amhara region, pullets were distributed to 330 selected beneficiaries in Kombolcha city administration and Kalu woreda. A total of 6,600 pullets were distributed, with 1,780 allocated for Kombolcha and 4,820 for Kalu. Each beneficiary received 20 Koekoek-breed pullets. The pullets, aged 48 days, met the required standards in terms of size and weight, ranging from 550 grams to 715 grams. After checking for health, breed, and physical condition, technical support was provided to beneficiaries by the FARM project and Livestock and Fisheries Development Project (LFSDP) teams at each distribution site.

In the Tigray region, a total of 27,607 pullets were distributed to 1,453 beneficiaries across three woredas: 13,243 pullets to Emba-Alage, 11,096 pullets to Kite-Awlaelo, and 3,168 pullets to Tahtay-Maichew. Each beneficiary received 19 pullets, following similar protocols as in the Amhara region. In addition, beneficiaries received a brief awareness session on pullet management upon the distribution of the pullets.

Contracts have been signed with suppliers for the two regions. Under the signed agreements with the suppliers, the FARM project is set to distribute a total of 264,154 Koekoek pullets for the Amhara region and 128,568 Sasso pullets for the Tigray region.



34,207
Pullets distributed



Livestock Farmers Field Schools Curricula and Manuals Handed Over



The ATI officially handed over the Livestock Farmers Field Schools curricula and manuals to the MoA. The curricula and manuals were developed for four prioritized livestock commodities (dairy, poultry, red meat, and capture fisheries), aiming to support the Livestock and Fisheries Farmers Field School (L&F FFS) approach.

The ATI has developed a training guide, trained 40 master trainers and 620 facilitators, and established over 300 L&F FFS across seven regions (Oromia, Amhara, Central Ethiopia, South Ethiopia, Sidama, South-West Ethiopia, and Benishangul-Gumuz). The curricula and manuals, translated into local languages, are essential for enhancing the skills and knowledge of smallholder livestock producers and other value chain actors.

On this occasion, Dr. Dagnachew Lule, Senior Director of the Agricultural Commercialization Cluster (ACC) program, underscored that as livestock is one of the focus areas of the ATI, the Institute has been designing interventions, mobilizing resources, and implementing livestock projects in collaboration with stakeholders. He also mentioned that the ATI had successfully implemented the Livestock and Fisheries Development Project (LFSDP) and piloted

L&F FFS across project regions. He added that the curricula and manuals were developed through the involvement of senior experts drawn from various federal and regional institutions and would contribute to the successful implementation of L&F FFS on the ground. He underlined that the ATI would continue strengthening established schools and scaling to other potential areas in collaboration with federal and regional stakeholders.

Dr. Thomas Chernet, Federal LFSDP Coordinator of the MoA, expressed his delight with the progress that the ATI had been making to support LFSDP. Dr. Thomas added that ATI's involvement had a significant impact on the success of the LFSDP. He further noted the importance of ATI's role in piloting L&F FFS and designing livestock and fisheries sector extension strategy, which has been validated and owned for implementation by the livestock sector of the MoA.

The handover of these vital documents marks a significant step towards advancing Ethiopia's livestock and fisheries sector, with the ATI and the MoA's commitment to continued collaboration and innovation in agricultural extension services.



Advancing Inclusive Rural & Agriculture Digital Ecosystems (AIRADE) Project Stakeholder Engagement Workshop

The ATI, in partnership with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), conducted a stakeholders' engagement workshop for the Advancing Inclusive Rural and Agricultural Ecosystem Digital Ecosystems (AIRADE) project on April 30, 2024, in Addis Ababa. This initiative signals a major step forward in shaping the future of digitization in Ethiopia's agricultural sector.

The AIRADE project is strategically designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Input Voucher System (IVS) scheme in Ethiopia through digitalization and financial inclusion. The ATI, jointly with the MoA, designed the IVS to improve smallholder farmers' access to credit and transactions for agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and improved seeds. The system has been upgraded to an Electronic Voucher System (e-voucher) to increase the functionality of the service. By leveraging the existing IVS and e-voucher system I, the AIRADE project aims to provide a comprehensive solution to improve the

agricultural value chain.

The participants discussed the development and adoption of open platforms, standards, and systems towards creating digital public infrastructure for improving farmers' productivity and income.

On this occasion, the criticality of safeguarding the privacy and data protection of farmers as well as building safe and secure data exchange frameworks in line with recently advanced national data protection frameworks and global standards has been emphasized.

The experience of Rwanda in the input subsidy digitalization system and the Indian AgStack and Universal Payment Interface (UPI) have also been explored and lessons gathered.

The workshop brought together stakeholders from across the agricultural value chain to collaborate on enhancing the functionality of the IVS/e-Voucher System in Ethiopia.





Digital Agriculture Partners Convening

A Digital Agriculture Partners Convening sought to boost Ethiopia's digital agriculture transformation efforts beyond advisory services. The ATI co-hosted the event with the MoA and Boston Consulting Group (BCG) on May 21, 2024, in Addis Ababa.

The primary objectives of the event were to introduce, refine, and promote Ethiopia's Digital Agriculture

growth within the sector, laying the foundation for a robust economy and society. She added that unlocking this potential requires a paradigm shift within the sector and strong collaboration across the entire ecosystem.

The event featured best practices in digital agriculture from both local and international perspectives.



Roadmap; share and enhance the implementation plan for prioritized use cases and enabling initiatives; and build momentum for resource mobilization and roadmap implementation.

Digital agriculture involves using technologies and integrated systems to empower farmers and stakeholders within the value chain. This includes tools that digitally collect, store, analyze, and share electronic data or information, facilitating informed decision-making.

The Digital Agriculture Roadmap follows a three-step approach: ecosystem diagnostics, roadmap development, and implementation plan development for identified priority use cases and enabling initiatives.

H.E. Dr. Sofia Kassa, State Minister of Agriculture, highlighted in her opening remarks that the journey towards digitalization is key to catalyzing economic

Notable examples included Lersha from Ethiopia and Protean from India, showcasing how digital platforms can benefit the wider community.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Mandefro Nigussie highlighted that the day marked a significant milestone in finalizing the roadmap centered on the future of digital farmers. He noted that many countries have successfully adopted digital agriculture, benefiting their farming communities. He stressed the importance of learning from these countries' experiences and adapting them to the local context to boost production and productivity. Dr. Mandefro expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the contributions of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and BCG and reiterated his commitment to the successful implementation of the roadmap, calling on development partners to provide technical and financial support, and encouraging local partners to join hands for its effective execution.



The ATI Provides Tractors for FPCs in Conflict-affected Woredas



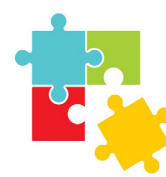
The ATI donated a total of 37 tractors with full accessories to conflict-affected woredas in the Amhara and Tigray regions: 19 tractors to the Amhara region and 18 to the Tigray region. handed over. The support seeks to enhance the Farmer Production Cluster (FPC) initiative, enabling it to transform subsistence agriculture into a mechanized system by benefiting thousands of smallholder farmers and providing affordable farming services to smallholder farmers.

The tractors were procured for approximately 146 million ETB with the financial support of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

The beneficiaries were selected based on conflict damage data, including farmer cooperative unions, agricultural cooperatives, seed production and marketing unions, horticulture cooperatives, FPCs, and organized youths.

The tractor handover events in Bahir Dar and Mekelle highlighted the vital role of mechanization in transforming agriculture in conflict-affected regions. Both the Amhara and Tigray Agricultural Transformation Centers, with the support of the DANIDA, are making significant strides in providing affordable farming services. Key regional officials emphasized the efforts of the ATI and its partners in driving the agricultural sector's recovery and development, fostering resilience, and promoting mechanized farming systems.





Restoring Hope through the FARM Project: The Story of Asiya Mohamed

It is widely acknowledged that during violent conflicts, women and children are disproportionately affected, resulting in loss of life, forced displacement, and other serious hardships. Through the Food Security and Agriculture Rehabilitation Measures in Conflict Affected Regions of Ethiopia (FARM)

Project, many people in the Amhara region appeared to have hope again once the fighting in northern Ethiopia subsided.

Implemented across 40 conflict-affected woredas, the project has extended vital support to 173,036 smallholder farmers through crop seed distribution, with 23.4% of the beneficiaries being women. Additionally, 8,074 smallholder farmers, 26% of whom are women, have benefited from the revolving crop seed. The project is also in process to support 13,207 women smallholder farmers through poultry distribution, 4,986 farmers through small ruminant support (80% women), 5,371 smallholder farmers through horticulture fruit seedlings (20% women), and 850 farmers (20% women) with water pump provision.

Mrs. Asiya Mohamed, a 34-year-old mother of two from Choresa Kebele, Kalu woreda, Ahmara region, is among the beneficiaries. Before the conflict, Asiya and her spouse ran a small shop funded by her earnings from eight years of work in Saudi Arabia. The shop was their only source of income. However, the conflict brought devastation, displacing Asiya and her family and destroying their home and business. Looking back on the hardship, Asiya said, "There are no words to express the feeling of being in an empty house.

This feeling is not only mine but shared by many villagers. The worst part was becoming hopeless."

Her hope was restored when Asiya was selected by the FARM Project for poultry intervention. She received twenty 45-day-old chickens and, following guidance

from Kebele Development Agents trained by the FARM Project, began to care for them. Asiya said,

"When I compare this to my previous income-generating activity, the benefits are not yet visible as the chickens are only three months and ten days old. But currently, they are my job and my hope. I have settled because of them. I have developed confidence and hope to scale up this poultry business, which will secure my family's livelihood. The support has rehabilitated many conflict-vulnerable women from both psychological trauma and economic crises."



Asiya expressed her gratitude to the FARM Project, saying, "On behalf of my kebele women and myself, please extend my gratitude to the poultry support."

The FARM Project's efforts in the Amhara region are not only providing immediate relief but also empowering women like Asiya to rebuild their lives and communities, fostering resilience and hope for the future.

The FARM Project is financed by the Agence Française de Développement / French Development Agency (AFD) and the European Union (EU).

Improving agriculture, improving life



Ahmed Nur, 34, is one of the successful smallholder farmers who joined the Horticulture Farmer's Production Cluster (FPC) project, one of ATI's flagship initiatives that aims to enhance farmers' adoption of full-package agricultural inputs and technology.

Eight years ago, Ahmed used to grow haricot bean, maize, and eucalyptus trees and practice traditional farming, heavily relying on seasonal rainfall. He lacked modern agricultural knowledge and was unhappy with the fruits of his labor. As such, he even left farming and engaged in contraband business at one time.

In 2016, he replaced the eucalyptus trees with avocado and other vegetable seedlings. Yet, he followed obsolete farming techniques.

In 2021, Ahmed and 78 other farmers, trained by the ATI, came together to form the Raro Avocado Cluster, with 59 hectares of land in Raro kebele, Shebedino woreda, Sidama region. While cultivating the 39 hectares of clustered land for avocados, they used

the rest for other crops. Ahmed has two hectares of avocado farms in the cluster. He sold his motorcycle to start this avocado cluster farming.

After entering the FPC, Ahmed defied traditional agricultural practices and embraced new agricultural innovations and practices such as groundwater irrigation, vermicompost application, zero energy cooling chamber utilization, avocado seedling production, and others.

"The ATI brought an expert to our kebele and trained me and others. Then, I went on to develop a groundwater pump irrigation scheme, produce avocado seedlings, plant about 420 grafted avocado trees, produce tomatoes and other vegetables on my land, and market horticulture products and seedlings," Ahmed recalled.

Ahmed calls ATI's toll-free farmer's hotlines to gain professional and timely information; 8028 for technical advice and 6077 for market information. He has established a market linkage with Yirgalem Integrated Agro-Industrial Park. The company



came to his farm and bought his produce. In 2023, Ahmed sold 3300 kilograms to the park. He also sold 600 kg to traders, who export avocados.

He regrettably talked about how the local community did not know anything about irrigation methods and rainwater harvesting skills that they acquired now, although they had underground water. "I now have a personal generator that helps me pump water, as well as water harvesting skills that I have learned and use," he proudly said.

Today, Ahmed, who has two grown-up children, considers his new status a phenomenon. He revealed that he earned more than one million ETB per year from avocado seedlings, tomatoes and other vegetables, dairy products, and beekeeping. He also created job opportunities for 32 youth (12 hired permanently and 20 on a temporary basis). They get paid 150–200 ETB per day.

"Can you imagine that before I made this transformation in agriculture with the support of the ATI, I only made less than 50,000 ETB annually?" Ahmed asked. He recalled how his family used to have poor nutrition, eating only haricot beans and maize all year. He is now grateful to God and the ATI for the great variety of healthy meals they put on their tables.

The positive changes in his family are not limited to the variety of food. He built a modern family

house that cost him 500,000 ETB in Leku Town and collected 2000 ETB monthly from the rent. He also purchased a Holstein milk cow, and his wife is selling dairy products by opening a small village shop.

Ahmed is also giving back to his community because of what he has received from the ATI. He claimed to generously share his knowledge and skills with any farmer within Shebedino woreda and freely distribute seedlings to others. Ahmed began his journey to success modestly and has amassed a fortune of more than 4.5 million ETB. Soon, he is planning to export avocados. "My advice to everybody is to share whatever one has. It is this sharing that changes the world," he remarked.

The FPC project clusters farmers together for faster diffusion of research recommendations, which improve farming practices and facilitate access to input finance by leveraging scale as well as increasing marketable surplus. It also makes modern technology, including machinery, more affordable, fosters bargaining power, and enables stronger market linkages, improving profitability through enhanced commercialization. The ultimate goal of FPC is to establish farmer-owned enterprises. The FPC intervention covers selected grain and horticulture commodities.

"The ATI brought an expert to our kebele and trained me and others. Then, I went on to develop a groundwater pump irrigation scheme, produce avocado seedlings, plant about 420 grafted avocado trees,"



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