

ATI NEWSLETTER



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A quarterly newsletter published by the
Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Institute

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

Read More >>>

Ethiopian Food Systems and
Nutrition Transformation
(EFSN) High-Level Leadership
Convening

Read More >>>

Graduation Ceremony for Dairy
Producers in L& F Farmers Field
School Approach in Central
Ethiopia

Read More >>>



The ATI Receives an Award for Its Pivotal Role in the National Wheat Development Program



CEO'S NOTE

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

Welcome to ATI's Quarterly Newsletter, covering the period from July to September 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 highlight the critical role of digital agriculture in unlocking new opportunities, enhancing productivity, and creating sustainable growth. The integration of digital tools and technologies into the agricultural sector has the potential to revolutionize how we approach farming, resource management, and market connectivity, ultimately leading to the empowerment of smallholder farmers and the achievement of national food security.

At the ATI, we recognize that digital agriculture is not just a technological innovation; it is a powerful tool for addressing some of the most pressing challenges in our agricultural sector. From climate variability and resource scarcity to market access and knowledge dissemination,

digital solutions provide new ways to overcome barriers that have long constrained productivity and income growth for smallholder farmers.

The ATI is committed to driving this transformation. Our work in launching projects like the Farmer Profiling initiative and supporting digital market linkages exemplifies our commitment to creating a robust digital ecosystem that supports Ethiopia's smallholder farmers. By harnessing the power of digital solutions, we can accelerate the pace of transformation and create a more resilient, sustainable, and productive agricultural sector.

However, the journey to digital transformation in agriculture requires collaboration. We must continue to engage with stakeholders across the public and private sectors, civil society, and development partners to scale up these innovations and ensure that they reach all farmers, especially those in rural and underserved areas.

Mandefro Nigussie
Chief Executive Officer



Innovations to help our country grow





The ATI Receives an Award for Its Pivotal Role in the National Wheat Development Program



The ATI was honored for its pivotal role in the success of Ethiopia's National Wheat Development Program on September 6, 2024. Dr. Mandefro Nigussie, CEO of the ATI, received the award from H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh during the Pagume 1 celebration, a moment that underscored Ethiopia's key achievements in agriculture.

The ATI has been a key player in Ethiopia's Wheat Development Program, which aims to achieve import substitution. From the outset, the Institute played a central role in designing the strategy to reduce the nation's dependence on imported wheat. The Institute has joined forces with partners to help establish pilot sites in the Omo Basin, testing the feasibility of irrigated wheat farming in Ethiopia's lowlands, where land and water resources are abundant.

Since the initiative's inception, the ATI has provided crucial technical and logistical support, including assigning dedicated experts to deliver technical backstopping and support the introduction of wheat farming to new areas, ultimately improving yields. The Institute also supplied vehicles, drivers, and fuel to ensure the smooth transportation of inputs, equipment, and personnel for the irrigated wheat operations across multiple planting rounds.

Through these efforts, the ATI has played a transformative role in demonstrating the potential of irrigated wheat farming in Ethiopia and scaling up best practices, contributing significantly to the country's journey toward wheat self-sufficiency and reducing its reliance on imports.





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

The ATI, in collaboration with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), recently hosted a stakeholder engagement workshop for the Advancing Inclusive Rural and Agricultural Digital Ecosystems (AIRADE) project. This initiative represents a significant milestone in advancing the digital transformation of Ethiopia's agricultural sector.

The AIRADE project is strategically designed to enhance the efficiency and impact of Ethiopia's Input Voucher System (IVS) through digitalization and financial inclusion. Developed by the ATI in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the IVS was created to improve smallholder farmers' access to credit and facilitate transactions for agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and improved seeds. The system has since been upgraded to an Electronic Voucher System (e-voucher), further enhancing its functionality. The AIRADE project aims to build on this foundation to provide a comprehensive solution for strengthening the agricultural value chain.

During the workshop, participants discussed the development and adoption of open platforms, standards, and systems to establish digital public infrastructure aimed at boosting farmers' productivity and income. Emphasis was placed on the importance of safeguarding farmers' privacy and data protection, as well as building secure data exchange frameworks that align with Ethiopia's newly advanced national

data protection framework and global standards.

The workshop also explored the experiences of Rwanda's input subsidy digitalization system and India's AgStack and Universal Payment Interface (UPI), drawing valuable lessons from both.

Bringing together stakeholders from across the agricultural value chain, the workshop fostered collaboration on improving the functionality of Ethiopia's IVS/e-Voucher System, contributing to the broader goal of digitalizing the country's agricultural ecosystem.





Launch of Digital Market Linkage Platform and E-voucher System 2.0 Projects

The ATI, in collaboration with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), launched two significant projects: the Automation of the Input Voucher System (eVoucher 2.0) and the Development and Implementation of a Digital Market Linkage Platform (DMLP) on July 16, 2024, in Adama.

The event was attended by high-level officials from key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI), the Ethiopian Cooperative Commission (ECC), and AGRA.

These projects seek to contribute to the transformation of Ethiopia's agricultural input and output marketing systems. The Digital Market Linkage Platform (DMLP) aims to connect smallholder farmers with potential buyers, providing access to sustainable markets and ensuring better prices for their products. Meanwhile, the eVoucher 2.0 system will enhance the efficient and transparent distribution of agricultural inputs, ensuring that farmers receive the necessary resources in a timely manner.





Ethiopian Food Systems and Nutrition Transformation (EFSN) High-Level Leadership Convening



Ethiopia remains steadfast in its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has actively participated in the UN Food Systems Summit. In this context, the Government of Ethiopia initiated the Ethiopian Food Systems and Nutrition (EFSN) process in December 2020, with substantive activities beginning in January 2021. This initiative aims to articulate a strategic vision and pathway for the transformation of national food systems.

The EFSN process involves 15 ministries and is coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health. It has successfully mobilized over 120 stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector entities, universities, research institutions, civil society organizations, and both multilateral and bilateral partners. Together, they have designed and launched the EFSN roadmap through a series of three dialogues.

A recent high-level meeting held in Dire Dawa on August 15, 2024, served as a pivotal event to discuss the performance of the 2016 Ethiopian Fiscal Year (EFY) and to chart the future trajectory of the EFSN roadmap. The primary objectives of this forum included assessing the outcomes and effectiveness of the strategic plans established in 2016, approving and endorsing new strategic plans for 2017, and reviewing the progress of key initiatives. The meeting was led by H.E. Temesgen Tiruneh, Deputy Prime Minister, and attended by regional presidents, mayors, and various other relevant stakeholders.

The gathering brought together policymakers and stakeholders to discuss critical issues, review past performance, and set a

course for future actions. The discussions aimed to ensure ongoing initiatives remain on track and to make necessary adjustments to meet the goals of improving Ethiopia's food systems, nutrition, and healthcare services.

Dr. Mandefro Nigussie, CEO of the ATI and the National EFSN Secretariat, delivered an engaging presentation showcasing the remarkable strides made during the EFY 2016 and outlining ambitious plans for EFY 2017. His presentation highlighted impressive progress achieved through the collaborative efforts of various government sectors, underscoring the collective commitment to advancing Ethiopia's food systems and nutrition landscape.

Following the presentation, the floor was opened for discussion, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. Participants voiced a range of concerns and suggestions, emphasizing the significance of the EFSN program. They noted that the program's alignment with UN food system standards is a testament to its excellence and its potential for transformative impact, provided it is effectively implemented.

In conclusion, the Deputy Prime Minister reiterated the directive for the immediate activation of the cluster working groups. He underscored the need to commence regional implementation processes without delay and to explore ways to integrate nutrition education into the school system.



Farmer Profiling Project Socialization Workshop

On August 13, 2024, the ATI hosted a socialization workshop in Adama to officially launch the Farmer Profiling Project, a key initiative aimed at advancing digital agriculture in the Oromia region. The project's main goal is to develop accessible and reusable farmer profiles that will play a pivotal role in supporting various digital agriculture efforts.



Key stakeholders from the Oromia Bureau of Agriculture (ORBoA), the Oromia trade and science bureaus, East Shewa zone, and Adea woreda participated in the workshop. Through productive discussions, the participants reached a consensus

to move forward with a pre-pilot phase in Adea woreda.

This pre-pilot, targeting 8,000 farmers, will focus on several critical areas: testing the system's performance, integrating it with the Fayda (Ethiopian National ID) platform, and determining the necessary operational requirements. Additionally, it will assess the efficiency of data collection, explore cost-reduction strategies, verify data attributes, and identify any potential errors in the system.

The workshop also included presentations on other related projects, such as 8o28, the National Market Information System (NMIS), Market Linkage, and the Digital Kiosk initiative, all of which align with the broader goals of the Farmer Profiling Project.

As the project progresses, ORBoA, the Adea Woreda Bureau of Agriculture, local experts, and development agents will be involved in its implementation. Insights gained from the pre-pilot will guide adjustments and improvements as the project moves into its next phase.





The ATI Senior Management Team Pays a Visit to ADEY-supported Youth Group

The senior management team of the ATI visited a youth entrepreneurship group supported by the Agriculture-Focused Dignified Employment for Youth in Ethiopia (ADEY) program in Luxo Kebele, Adama Woreda, East Shewa Zone, Oromia region on July 18, 2024. The group, comprising 30 women and 10 men, includes college graduates facing employment challenges, and has been receiving support under the ADEY program.

Three months prior to the visit, with the backing of the Mastercard Foundation, the ATI provided the group with 1,600 pullets, feed, and technical guidance. During the visit, 57-60% of the pullets were laying eggs, significantly increasing the group's income.

During the visit, Dr. Mandefro Nigussie, CEO of the ATI, commended the dedication and rapid progress of the young participants, acknowledging their role in motivating other youth to create opportunities through perseverance and hard

work. Mr. Deselagn Duguma, Senior Director of the Oromia Agricultural Transformation Center, echoed these sentiments, praising the group's exemplary performance as a model for peers aspiring to self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Representatives of the youth group expressed gratitude to the ATI and the Mastercard Foundation for the transformative support they received. They highlighted improvements in their business operations and shared their plans to expand their enterprise, which currently generates an average monthly income of 230,400 birr from egg sales.

In conclusion, Dr. Mandefro extended his thanks to the Mastercard Foundation for their partnership in transforming the lives of young citizens by engaging them in dignified jobs. This collaboration reflects a shared commitment to promoting sustainable livelihoods and empowering youth across the target regions.





Graduation Ceremony for Dairy Producers in L& F Farmers Field School Approach in Central Ethiopia



On July 2, 2024, the Livestock and Fisheries Sector Development Project (LFSDP), in collaboration with the Central Ethiopia Region's Bureau of Agriculture, celebrated the graduation of dairy producers from the Livestock and Fisheries Farmers Field School (L&F FFS) program in Qedida Gamela Woreda, Kembata and Tambaro zones. A total of 177 dairy producers, 66% of whom were women, completed the yearlong skill-based training under the theme "Calf-to-Calf" and successfully passed the competency test. The graduates were drawn from six L&F FFS schools representing two kebeles with strong dairy development potential. The event commenced with an opening prayer.

In her keynote address, Mrs. Wubayehu Bekele, Chief Administrator of the woreda, expressed her pride in the dairy producers and graduates for completing the intensive training. She emphasized the importance of the L&F FFS focus on dairy, a key commodity for the woreda, and praised the "Calf-to-Calf" approach, which tracks dairy production from one calving to the next. Mrs. Wubayehu was particularly impressed by the high number of female graduates, highlighting the program's success in fostering women's participation in dairy farming. She thanked the ATI and its collaborators for providing such a valuable opportunity and pledged continued support to sustain and expand the program.

Mr. Mulugeta Tesfaye, the regional coordinator for L&F FFS, noted that the piloting of the program was led by the ATI at the national level and implemented in collaboration with regional and woreda livestock teams. He underscored the critical role of capacity-building in improving livestock practices, stating that ATI's national leadership, in partnership with the LFSDP

and regional teams, has empowered livestock producers, particularly women, to enhance their skills and confidence.

Dr. Yoseph Mekasha, Director of the Livestock Commercialization Program at the ATI, congratulated the graduates and emphasized that despite Ethiopia's vast potential for livestock development, progress has been hindered by low adoption of improved technologies and practices. He pointed out that the traditional one-size-fits-all extension approach has not effectively served livestock producers or stakeholders. To address this, the livestock and fisheries extension strategy and roadmap, developed by the ATI and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), promotes a multi-faceted extension approach, with L&F FFS at the forefront. As part of this initiative, the ATI, in collaboration with the MoA and other partners, has been piloting the L&F FFS approach through the LFSDP in 58 woredas, including Qedida Gamela, across eight regions.

The L&F FFS is an adult learning participatory extension model that brings together smallholder farmers working on the same commodity to solve their challenges collectively. It fosters interaction, experience-sharing, and skill development among livestock producers. To date, the ATI has contextualized the approach for livestock, trained 40 master trainers and over 620 facilitators, developed and translated training manuals into local languages, and established over 300 schools across project regions. Nearly 10,000 livestock producers have participated in this approach.

The graduation ceremony included experience-sharing from selected graduates, a certificate presentation, and a lively traditional dance performance.

The FARM Project Enhances Agricultural Productivity in Conflict-Affected Regions of Ethiopia



The Food Security and Agriculture Rehabilitation Measures (FARM) project has been actively working to restore agricultural productivity in conflict-affected areas of Ethiopia. Through a series of initiatives aimed at improving food security and providing economic opportunities for vulnerable communities, the project has made significant strides.

On August 26, 2024, the FARM project, implemented by the Tigray Agricultural Transformation Center (TATC), distributed and planted approximately 30,000 seedlings across seven beneficiary woredas in the region. This included 25,000 avocado seedlings and 5,000 apple seedlings.

The apple seedling plantation ceremony was officially launched on August 12, 2024, in Emba-Alaje woreda, with the participation of the Woreda Administrator, the Woreda Economy Sector Head, local experts, and representatives from ATI-TATC. During this event, 4,000 apple seedlings were planted by 400 beneficiaries in Alaje woreda, while another 1,000 seedlings were planted in Selawa woreda by 100 beneficiaries. Overall, a total of 5,000 apple seedlings have been planted across both woredas, with 50% of the beneficiaries being women. This initiative represents a significant step toward enhancing agricultural productivity and supporting local communities in the region.

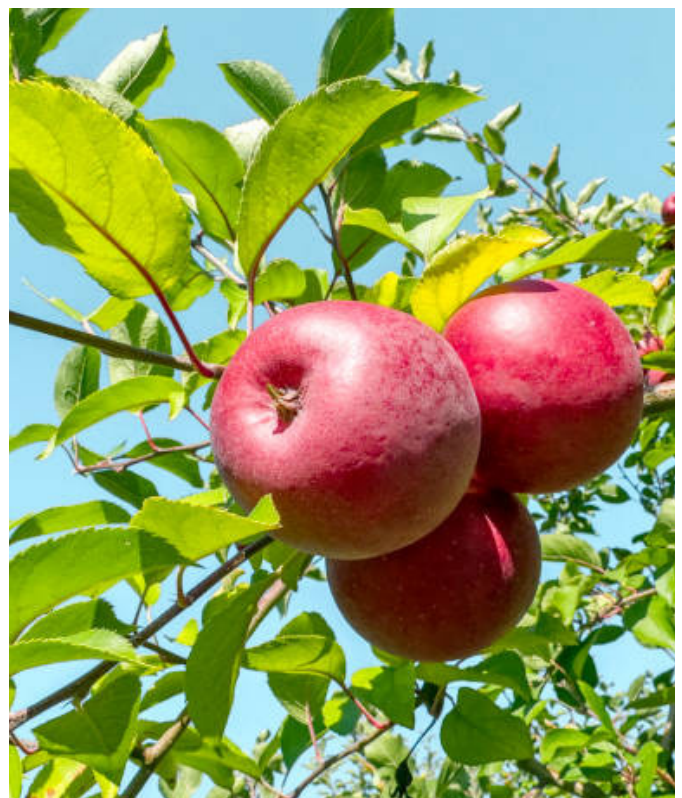
To date, the project has delivered approximately 17,000 seedlings, including 12,000 avocado and 5,000 apple seedlings, to the seven beneficiary woredas: R/Chercher, R/azebo, Hintalo K/

awulaelo, Ahforom, E/alaje, and Selawa.

Similarly, on September 9, 2024, the Amhara Agricultural Transformation Centre (AATC), through the FARM project, held a socialization workshop for 49 participants, including 10 women, at regional, zonal, and woreda focal points. The workshop aimed to create a common understanding of beneficiary selection criteria, distribution modalities, and seedling management strategies. Beneficiaries also received technical training from local experts to ensure proper management of the seedlings.

Following the socialization workshop, the project plans to distribute and plant approximately 70,000 fruit seedlings across 17 selected woredas. The planned varieties include 5,800 avocado seedlings (with a 9:1 ratio of Hass to Entiger), 33,000 papaya seedlings, 22,000 apple seedlings, and 9,000 banana seedlings, benefiting 5,371 households.

To date, the project has exceeded its targets, planting 70,600 fruit seedlings, 101% of its goal, across 65 hectares in five zones. A total of 5,859 beneficiaries, including 23% women, have participated in this initiative, contributing to sustainable agriculture and income diversification in the region.



The FARM Project's Field Visit and Beehive Distribution



On September 25, 2024, the FARM project teams from the ATI headquarters and regional transformation centers conducted a field visit and provided technical support in the South Wollo Zone of the Amhara region, specifically in Kombolcha City Administration (KCA) and Kalu woreda.

Since its launch in 2023, the FARM project has made significant progress in implementing various agricultural interventions across the Amhara region. Key initiatives include the distribution of improved seeds, livestock supplies, and vegetable seeds to conflict-affected farmers across six zones and 40 woredas. To date, the project has successfully distributed 29,609 chickens and 14,128 sheep and goats to 1,480 and 4,709 households, respectively, with the goal of diversifying livelihoods and improving household economies for smallholder farmers affected by conflict.

During the visit to KCA, the team observed that 99 goats had been distributed to 33 beneficiaries, 80% of whom were women. Each beneficiary received three female goats, many of which have already started kidding. This practice aims to provide animals for future farmers through a revolving approach, encouraging beneficiaries to support their neighbors within the system.

In Kalu woreda, 10,318 chickens were distributed to 516 beneficiaries, all of whom were women. These beneficiaries have already begun collecting eggs, which contribute to both income generation and improved nutrition for their households. They were advised to use some of the eggs for hatching and to combine them with local chicken breeds to maximize the benefits of the intervention.

The FARM project, under the Tigray Agricultural Transformation



Center (TATC), also distributed 90 modern Zander beehives and 30 starter hives to 30 beneficiaries, including seven women, during an event held on August 25, 2024, at Emba Alaje Woreda in the Tigray region. The event was attended by 46 woreda officials, representatives from TATC, and the beneficiaries. This distribution is part of the FARM project's plan to distribute 1,300 honeybee colonies, along with hives and accessories, to 434 beneficiaries across 14 project woredas in the region. Each beneficiary will receive three honeybee colonies as part of the initiative to support farmers in conflict-affected areas.

In a related effort, on September 4, 2024, the FARM project distributed 123 modern Zander beehives, 41 starter hives, and essential beekeeping accessories to 41 conflict-affected farmers, including 12 women, in Tahtay Maichew Woreda, Tigray Region. The distributed accessories included bee queen excluders, pure beeswax, smokers, hive tools, safety clothing, and other necessary equipment.

The distribution ceremony was attended by key woreda officials, including Mr. Gizachew Gebremeskel, Woreda Administrator; Mr. Hadush Mawcha, Head of the Economic Sector Office; and Mr. Gidey Gebrewahid, Coordinator of Livestock and Fishery Development. Representatives from the FARM project team and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), including Serkadis Kassa, Getachew Animut, and Getachew Tilahun, also participated in the event.



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Happy New Year!



Ethiopian  **ATI**
Agricultural Transformation Institute
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The Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Institute (ATI), formerly known as the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA), is a strategy and delivery-oriented government institute created to help accelerate the growth and transformation of Ethiopia's agriculture sector, which is a key contributor to the country's GDP, exports, and workforce. The ATI's work is centered on improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers across the country for improved income, inclusiveness, resilience, and sustainability.



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