



POLICY EVOLUTION AND COHERENCE FOR NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS IN ETHIOPIA



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Introduction

Malnutrition remains a persistent public health challenge in Ethiopia (child stunting, micronutrient deficiencies, diet-related NCDs).

Policy transitioning from sector-siloed Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture (NSA) to a broader, holistic Agri-Food Systems Transformation.

Need to assess horizontal and temporal policy coherence, evidence utilization, and enabling conditions across Ethiopia’s evolving agriculture and nutrition strategies.

Objective

To systematically analyze the evolution, coherence, and evidence base of Ethiopia’s nutrition-sensitive agri-food policy landscape to evaluate its capacity to support food system transformation, research integration, and localized agroecological potential.

Methodology

Scope of the study: 2013-2032

Policy Evolution

- Four national strategies were purposively selected to represent key milestones in Ethiopia’s nutrition and agriculture policy trajectory.
 - Revised National Nutrition Program I (NNP I)
 - National Nutrition Program II (NNP II)
 - National Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Strategy (NNSAS)
 - National Agro-Food System Strategy (NAFSS)
- The analysis was guided by a comparative thematic framework structured around three core dimensions of policy evolution:
 - Content (Objective) dynamics.
 - Attention to research and practice
 - Attention to budgeting and finance

Policy Coherence

- Coherence Scoring Framework: Evaluated 6 core NAFSS themes using a 0–3 scale (3="Strong", 2="Moderate", 1="Loose", 0="None"):
 - Food availability & access
 - Resilience of vulnerable communities
 - Post-harvest management, value addition & safety
 - Consumption of diversified, nutritious diets
 - Institutional capacity & coordination
 - Empowerment of women, youth & vulnerable groups
- Approach: Longitudinal policy analysis, objective-level coherence mapping, enabling environment assessment, and citation mapping.

Key Findings

Temporal Evolution of Policy Framing

- NNP I (2013–2015): Introduced explicit NSA linkages (Strategic Objective 4) via fruit/vegetable targets and school gardens; budget costed (~\$547M) but reliance on donor funding.
- NNP II (2016–2020): Deepened NSA as a core strategic objective; expanded to market linkages and gender empowerment.
- NNSAS (2017–2021): Established NSA as a distinct agricultural domain focused on value chains; strong applied research emphasis but lacked binding budget commitments.
- NAFSS (2022–2032): Embedded nutrition as an emergent, system-wide outcome of resilient agri-food systems; shifted toward investment frameworks, private sector engagement, and climate finance

Policy Coherence Matrix with NAFSS

Table 1: Objective-level internal coherence matrix

Policy / Strategy	O1	O2	O3	O4	O5	O6	Total	Average
National Enset Development Flagship Program	3	3	3	3	2	3	17	2.8
Postharvest Management Strategy	3	2	3	2	3	2	15	2.5
Food Safety & Quality Strategy	3	1	3	3	3	1	14	2.3
Agricultural Extension Strategy	2	2	2	2	3	3	14	2.3
National Apiculture Development Strategy	2	2	2	2	3	2	13	2.2
Livestock & Fisheries Extension Strategy	2	2	1	1	3	1	10	1.7
Smallholder Irrigation & Drainage Strategy	3	2	1	1	3	2	12	2.0

Evidence Use & Enabling Environment

- Evidence Base:** Policy formulation draws heavily on national reports (CSA, DHS) and Ethiopia-based empirical research, disproving claims of purely top-down policy design.
- Financing Bottleneck:** High policy ambition for research is constrained by low-to-moderate dedicated domestic research financing.

Conclusions

Embed Nutrition Indicators: Mandate explicit dietary quality and consumption metrics in commodity, livestock, and irrigation strategies.

Bridge the Finance Gap: Establish dedicated, binding budget lines for food systems and NSA empirical research.

Scale Localized Models: Expand context-specific, agroecologically grounded models (e.g., the Enset Flagship Program) to other indigenous crop systems

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