

About this newsletter

The RAISE-FS LOGIC newsletter serves as an informative platform, continuing the legacy of the RAISE-FS project by focusing on developments in agrologistics to foster resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food systems. This edition aims to provide stakeholders with insights into the latest developments and pressing issues within the Ethiopian food system, as well as an overview of the project's support activities. Highlighted within this publication are major developments happened from June to September 2026.

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Simple fixes, big gains: Improving agrologistics in Ethiopia

Small, targeted upgrades to Ethiopia's cold-storage facilities could protect more fresh produce, reduce waste and strengthen agricultural value chains, according to findings from a recent technical mission in Addis Ababa.

Ethiopia's agrologistics system is expanding, but major gaps remain between production areas and markets. Fresh fruit and vegetables often move through fragmented supply chains with limited access to pre-cooling, temperature-controlled

storage, suitable packaging and refrigerated transport. Long distances, uneven infrastructure, unreliable energy supply and limited technical capacity can shorten shelf life and

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Simple fixes, big gains: Improving agrologistics in Ethiopia ...

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reduce the value that reaches farmers, traders and consumers.

The scale of the challenge is substantial. Ethiopia's National Postharvest Management Strategy for 2024–2030 reports losses of about 20–30% for grains and 30–50% for horticultural products, identifying inadequate

store operated by the Ethiopian Trading and Business Corporation (ETBC), to identify practical opportunities for reducing losses and improving performance.

One of the most urgent findings was the widespread use of kerosene to ripen agricultural products. Open-flame heating provides no reliable temperature control and can



infrastructure and logistics among the leading causes. Improving agrologistics is therefore central to food-system transformation: it can make more food available without requiring equivalent increases in production, while protecting incomes, natural resources and product quality.

Against this backdrop, the RAISE-FS LOGIC scoping mission, conducted with PUM expert Simon Benard, examined how these wider agrologistics challenges play out at facility level in Addis Ababa. The team assessed several cold-storage facilities, including a ripening room at a farmers' market shed and a cold

reduce oxygen levels to 15–16%, while also creating environmental and operational risks. The challenges of ripening techniques also include uneven maturity and irregular colour development within a single banana finger, fruit detachment, and high post-harvest losses. Effective banana ripening depends on precise temperature management and controlled ethylene injection. The team estimated that replacing kerosene with electrical heating and an electronic thermostat would cost about €400 per room; a modest investment with the potential to improve safety, efficiency and product quality.

The visits also revealed how basic maintenance issues can lead to avoidable losses. At one cold store, water had been accumulating on the floor for six months, and workers did not know why. The team traced the problem to poor alignment and gaps between the door and the floor. Escaping cold air was meeting warm air and creating condensation. Replacing the door rail system to achieve a proper seal resolved the issue.

At another facility, an avocado cold store was set to 9°C with a 4°C operating interval. The recommended interval is 1°C. The wider fluctuation allowed the chamber to warm to about 13°C, increasing moisture and causing condensation on the fruit. The



resulting “wet” appearance reduced product quality and contributed to losses.

The field mission demonstrated that improving agrologistics starts with understanding how facilities operate in practice. In a short visit, the RAISE-FS LOGIC team identified problems that were not caused by a complete lack of infrastructure, but by gaps in equipment, calibration, maintenance and operating knowledge. Targeted advice on door sealing, thermostat settings, electrical heating and safe ripening practices showed how relatively small interventions can quickly improve storage performance, preserve product quality and reduce post-harvest losses.



Some traditional stores and local wholesalers use kerosene smoke in airtight rooms to ripen green bananas because burning kerosene releases small amounts of ethylene and acetylene gases, which act as ripening hormones



Building on these lessons will require action at several levels. Cold-store owners and operators need practical training, preventive-maintenance routines and simple operating standards for different commodities. Regular technical audits and stronger links among producers, markets, storage operators and transporters would help ensure that investments are used effectively. The mission confirms that food-system transformation is not driven only by large infrastructure projects: combining effective management and use these infrastructures can build a safer, more efficient and resilient agrologistics system for Ethiopia, reduce food waste, strengthen rural and urban market connections, and support food security and environmental sustainability.

Strengthening researchers' communication skills through shared learning experiences

A two-day training is helping researchers at Gondar Agricultural Research Centre turn valuable findings into information that people can understand and use.

Research only creates impact when its findings reach the people who can apply them. With this in mind, Gondar Agricultural Research Centre (GARC) organised a training on research communication and technical writing on 18–19 August 2026. About 60 researchers from the Centre's different research directorates took part in the demand-driven training, with technical support from SWR Ethiopia's RAISE-FS Project.

The training focused on a practical question: how can researchers communicate their work beyond scientific journals and connect with the people who need the information?



The sessions introduced a range of communication products, including policy briefs, technical manuals, factsheets, presentations, field demonstrations, training materials, mass media, social media and digital platforms. The key message was clear: effective communication is not about producing more documents. It is about choosing the right message, format and channel for the people the research is intended to serve.

Clear writing, credible evidence

The training also gave researchers practical opportunities to strengthen their technical and professional writing. Discussions focused on clarity, conciseness, coherence and credibility, as well as the way structure, language and evidence influence whether a document is understood and used.

Participants also considered the ethical responsibilities that come with communicating research. Accuracy, transparency and responsible presentation of evidence are essential to maintaining trust. The training encouraged researchers to think about communication and uptake throughout

their day-to-day communication. This made the training practical and gave participants an opportunity to learn from one another.

Participants were introduced to a step-by-step approach for developing communication products: define the purpose and audience, shape the message, select the right format and channel, and review and refine the final product.

Dr Tewdros Tesfaye, GARC's director, welcomed the support provided by the project and facilitators. He emphasised that researchers have a responsibility to work professionally and ethically, provide accurate information to users and help translate research findings into tangible results.

The wider effort

Similar communication training was also organised for seed researchers from different research centres through the Amhara Agricultural Research Institute's (ARARI) Technology Multiplication and Seed Research Directorate. The training recognised that seed researchers work



Putting audiences first

Participants explored the importance of identifying an audience before choosing a message or communication channel. Farmers, policymakers, extension professionals, development organisations, private-sector actors and other research users may all need the same findings presented in different ways.

the research process; not only after results have been generated.

Learning from experience

The sessions were grounded in participants' own work. Researchers shared examples, discussed challenges they face when preparing reports and other outputs, and exchanged ideas on how to improve

with a wide range of stakeholders and need to communicate technical information clearly.

Dr Aemro Bezabih, Director of Technology Multiplication and Seed Research at ARARI, noted that researchers need strong communication knowledge and skills because they interact with many



stakeholders. Participants in both trainings said they had gained practical knowledge they could apply in their upcoming work.

Strengthening the research-to-impact pathway

The GARC training forms part of the RAISE-FS Project's broader effort to strengthen agricultural communication and improve how research is shared with different audiences. When researchers understand who they are communicating with, choose appropriate channels and present evidence clearly, their findings are

more likely to inform decisions, influence practice and support the uptake of technologies and innovations.

The training reinforced an important point: publication is not the finish line. Research becomes more valuable when people can understand it, access it and act on it. By strengthening researchers' communication and writing skills, RAISE-FS is helping build a stronger link between the people who generate agricultural knowledge and those who can put it to work.

Dr Tewdros Tesfaye, GARC Director



Trainees in a role play to identify stakeholder types based on their information needs.



Mycotoxin contamination in major Ethiopian crops: A call for strengthened food safety measures

In Ethiopia, the prevalence of mycotoxins in staple crops such as red pepper, sesame, and soybeans is a pressing issue threatening both public health and economic stability. These naturally occurring toxins, produced by fungi, have been found at significant levels in these crops, raising significant concerns over food safety and storage practices. This story delves into the findings of a recent study on mycotoxin contamination and explores the implications for farmers, consumers, and policymakers.

Understanding mycotoxins and their risks

Mycotoxins, particularly aflatoxins and ochratoxins, are toxic compounds that can contaminate food products when post-harvest management is inadequate. These toxins pose severe health risks, including cancer and developmental stunting. Despite their dangers, awareness and assessment of mycotoxins in domestic Ethiopian produce are limited, with most data focusing on export-oriented commodities.

Key findings from the study

The study conducted in the Amhara region of Northwest Ethiopia reveals that contamination levels of aflatoxin and ochratoxin in red pepper, sesame, and soybean significantly exceed permissible limits. The findings highlight a critical gap in farmer awareness, especially among sesame and soybean growers. While some red pepper farmers are informed about

mycotoxins, traditional handling practices and inadequate moisture management continue to exacerbate contamination risks.

Notably, the practice of adding moisture to red pepper pods post-harvest to prevent splitting or enhance perceived quality is identified as a major contributor to increased mycotoxin risk. Moreover, traditional storage methods and reliance on manual moisture assessment further elevate the potential for fungal growth and contamination.

Recommendations for improved food safety

To address these challenges, the study offers several recommendations aimed at enhancing food safety protocols and reducing mycotoxin risks:

Community specific strategy

The high prevalence of mycotoxin contamination in the evaluated commodities signals the need for developing commodity specific strategies with targeted actions across the value chains including strengthening the regulatory system. Mycotoxin contamination and risk assessment studies should cover more areas with significant number.



Enhance awareness

Awareness creation should not only consider producers, rather it should include traders, processors, consumers, and policy makers as mycotoxin contamination is prevalent in the whole value chain.



Post-harvest technologies

Use of improved pre- and post-harvest technologies such as locally manufactured moisture tester, driers, hermetic bags, storage and transportation facilities, integrating with Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices would significantly contribute to minimize fungal infection and hence mycotoxin contamination.



Extension and advisory support

The extension service would include post-harvest management support to producers, storage service providers, transporters and processors to minimize fungal infection and mycotoxin contamination.



Strong food safety platform

Establish a strong, sustainable, and accountable multi-sectoral food safety platform to coordinate food safety initiatives, strengthen regulatory enforcement to curb the unsafe practices such as sprinkling water on dried pepper pods and elevate the mycotoxin issues to the national policy agenda.



The study team and field-level data collection

The prevalence of mycotoxins in Ethiopian crops underscores an urgent need for strengthened food safety protocols and innovative solutions. By adopting targeted strategies and fostering greater awareness across the agricultural value chain, Ethiopia can safeguard public health, enhance agricultural productivity, and reduce economic losses associated with contaminated produce. It is imperative that stakeholders work collaboratively to address this critical issue and ensure a safer food supply for all.

Transforming local food systems in Ethiopia through the Woreda LMAT (ወረዳ ለማት) comprehensive approach

Ethiopia's diverse agro-ecological landscape presents unique opportunities and challenges for sustainable agricultural development. Recognizing the need for context-specific interventions, the Woreda LMAT (Local Multi-Actor Transformation) guideline offers a bottom-up, evidence-based planning framework designed to transform local food systems. This approach emphasizes collaborative governance, comprehensive profiling, and strategic alignment with national and regional priorities to enhance local ownership, resource utilization, and sustainable development outcomes.

The Woreda LMAT framework is grounded in five interrelated components:

Institutional mandating: This involves clearly defining roles and responsibilities for local governments and knowledge institutes to enable coordinated action. By formalizing these roles, the framework ensures that all stakeholders are aligned and accountable.

Woreda food system profiles: Detailed profiles provide an evidence-based understanding of local demographics, production systems, markets, nutrition, and social

inclusion. These profiles are crucial for identifying leverage points and designing targeted interventions.

Innovation recommendation mapping (IRM): This component identifies context-specific innovations and scaling niches through spatial and stakeholder-informed analysis. IRM integrates biophysical, social, economic, and infrastructural data to locate suitable niches for scaling innovations.

Alignment with national and regional strategies: Local plans are designed to reinforce broader strategies and flagship programs, ensuring that interventions at the woreda level are in harmony with national development goals.

Woreda bottom-up planning: Active participation of local stakeholders is integral to crafting, implementing, and monitoring plans. This participatory approach ensures that interventions are relevant and sustainable.

Key steps for evidence-based planning

The Woreda LMAT approach involves several key steps:

Mandating relevant actors for collaborative governance and implementation.

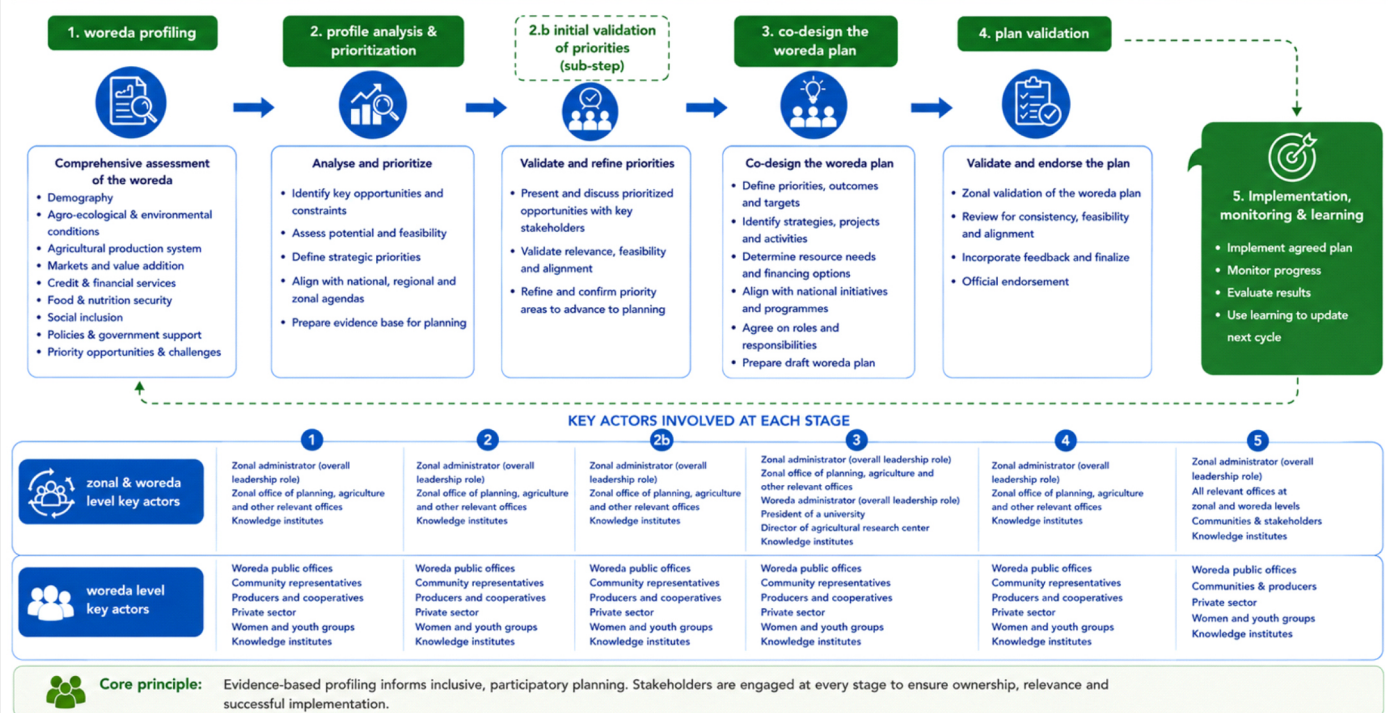
Conducting woreda food system profiling using Rapid Food System Appraisal (RFSA) and baseline surveys.

- Utilizing Innovation Recommendation Mapping to identify suitable locations and inputs for innovation bundles.
- Aligning local plans with national and regional strategies.
- Engaging in woreda bottom-up planning to coordinate implementation, monitoring, and scaling of selected innovations.

The role of knowledge institutes

Knowledge institutes play a central role in supporting profiling, plan design, technology testing, capacity building, and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) activities. These institutes collaborate with zonal and woreda administrations to ensure that plans are evidence-based and contextually relevant. Implementation strategy The implementation strategy assigns explicit roles and responsibilities across federal, regional, zonal, woreda, and kebele levels. Resource

Framework: from woreda profiling to woreda bottom-up planning



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mobilization is tied to annual budgeting, with key activities including adapting the guideline to regional contexts, building capacity, coordinating multi-sectoral implementation, and establishing MEL systems to track progress and adapt strategies.

In conclusion, the Woreda LMAT guideline represents a transformative approach to integrating bottom-up and top-down planning in Ethiopia. By aligning local plans with national and regional priorities, addressing multidimensional community needs, and promoting sustainable

development, the framework aims to maximize each woreda's potential within Ethiopia's broader transformational agenda. Through phased scaling from pilot zones to national mainstreaming, the guideline sets the stage for a more resilient and inclusive agricultural future.

New publications

[Living income benchmarking in nine woredas of Ethiopia](#)



[Woreda LMAT \(ወረዳ ለማት\) "Woreda profiling, planning and implementation through Local Mandating for Effective Agricultural Transformation" Guideline](#)



[Behaviour change communication for fruit and vegetable consumption: Exploring the drivers of dietary behaviour in rural Ethiopia](#)



[Mycotoxin prevalence in red pepper, sesame and soya bean in Northwest Ethiopia](#)



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