

Testing double-fortified salt with iodine and folic acid in Ethiopia

Nutrition International launched a new three-year project in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia, the University of Toronto, the University of California at Davis, and the International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, which aims to develop, test and bring to market double-fortified salt with iodine and folic acid in Ethiopia.

Ensuring that women have adequate folic acid intake before conception reduces the risks of folate-deficiency anaemia and the number of births affected by neural tube defects, which can result in early neonatal deaths or long-term disabilities. The prevalence of neural tube defects is more than eight times higher in Ethiopia compared to other African nations. Across the country, diets lack foods rich in folate, with folate insufficiency among women varying from 60-100% between regions.

The Government of Ethiopia has mandated salt iodisation since 2011 and adequately iodised salt currently reaches more than 90% of the population, reducing the prevalence of iodine deficiency disorders, such as goitre. Double-fortified salt with iodine and folic acid has the potential to be a sustainable at-scale solution for increasing the population's intake for both iodine and folate.

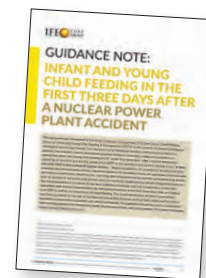
More than 20 years ago, double-fortified salt with iodine and folic acid was developed in a laboratory at the University of Toronto. This project will support its production within Ethiopia using the same Central Iodization Facilities that were created to iodise salt mechanically. The project is designed to kickstart the eventual move to replace all iodised salt in the country with double-fortified salt and will test its acceptability and biological effect in the country's population, engaging government institutions and salt producers in Ethiopia and sharing findings with international organisations and other relevant stakeholders.

For more information, please see: <https://www.nutritionintl.org/news/all-news/nutrition-international-and-partners-launch-project-to-test-new-double-fortified-salt-product-intended-to-reduce-the-risk-of-neural-tube-defects-in-ethiopia/>



Salt production in Ethiopia

Update on the GNC Technical Alliance Global Thematic Working Groups



The Global Nutrition Cluster Technical Alliance (the Alliance) aims to provide predictable, timely and coordinated nutrition technical assistance to meet the nutrition needs of people affected by and at risk of emergencies. The Alliance's primary function is to provide technical advice, facilitate rapid, consensus-driven stop-gap guidance in the absence of established normative guidance, and provide specialised technical expertise. The mechanism is led by UNICEF and co-led by World Vision, with a leadership team including the Global Nutrition Cluster Coordination Team, ENN, and Action Against Hunger.

Within the Alliance, the Global Thematic Working Groups (GTWGs) are groups of key experts convening to develop timely consensus-driven, technical stop-gap guidance. There are currently five GTWGs centred around various thematic areas, namely infant feeding in emergencies (IFE) (for which the IFE Core Group acts as the GTWG), wasting, nutrition information systems (NIS), and nutrition and cash and voucher assistance (CVA) as well as a newly established management of small and nutritionally at-risk infants under six months and their mothers (for which the MAMI Global Network has agreed to fill the role of the GTWG). Additionally, two time-bound taskforces have been established to develop guidance on nutrition in Ebola treatment units and women's nutrition in emergencies.

Over the course of this year to date, in response to escalated questions from Ethiopia, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Yemen, Nigeria, and Haiti, the GTWGs have developed various guidance documents and learning pieces. While not all can be mentioned here, there follows some of the highlights. The IFE Core Group has developed nuclear radiation and chemical/biological warfare incidence guidance¹ for appropriate IFE responses, as well as **country level case studies (page 41)** on complementary feeding in emergencies. The Wasting GTWG has been supporting the mapping of national wasting guidelines, wasting prevention initiatives, and an analysis of the cost of not treating wasting as well as harmonising costing and cost effectiveness methodologies. The NIS GTWG has established country focused taskforces to support national nutrition survey planning and data quality verification in several specific countries. The CVA GTWG has mapped out promising practices and ways of overcoming challenges in CVA for nutrition programming and developed related capacity building tools.

As nutritional needs are expected to grow in many contexts over the coming months, the Alliance remains committed to responding to in-country technical needs and supporting country level practitioners.

Should you need technical guidance, please reach out using the Alliance's request page, at <https://ta.nutritioncluster.net/request-support>

¹ <https://www.enonline.net/ifenuclearguidance>