



Critical topics in Vietnam and Ethiopia's Food Systems Related Policies

An exploratory policy review

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This research was funded by The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) programme on Food System for Healthier Diets (FSHD), part of the IFPRI-led Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) phase II (2017 – 2022). (project number 8141708305)

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation
Wageningen, March 2021

Report WCDI-21-147

Owili, J., Likoko, E., Pittore, K., 2021. *Critical topics in Vietnam and Ethiopia's Food Systems Related Policies; An exploratory policy review*. Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research. Report WCDI-21-147. Wageningen.

This study provides an overview of the connection between the existing multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) which are active in the nutrition and food space, and the current national policy agendas related to the food system in Ethiopia and Vietnam, focusing on how both the policies and the MSPs conceptualized both food systems divers and outcomes.

At the outcome level, Ethiopia's policies focus on persistently high levels of maternal and child undernutrition. Policies seek to address these outcomes by focusing on intensification and diversification of production and environmental drivers including reliance on rainfall and high levels of seasonality and poor infrastructure, leading to high levels of post-harvest food waste especially of perishable foods. In Vietnam, outcomes focus on high levels of undernutrition in rural and ethnic minority communities as well as micronutrient deficiencies. Key food system drivers include climate change, rapid rural-urban migration and issues linked to increasing distance between producers and consumer such as food safety issues.

In both Ethiopia and Vietnam Multi-stakeholder platforms are largely working on the same issues as those prioritized in policies. Policies which govern the food system and MSPs have yet to adopted a food systems framing, however there are policies and MSPs active in many parts of the food system.

Keywords: Ethiopia, Vietnam, Food Systems, Agriculture and Food Security and Nutrition Policy, Multi-stakeholder Platforms, Food systems

This report can be downloaded for free at <https://doi.org/10.18174/537354> or at www.wur.eu/cdi (under publications).



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Report WCDI-21-147

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Acknowledgements

This paper is based on the work of a number of colleagues at Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation including Marion Herens, Sanne Bakker and Bram Peters who carried the initial platform scanning work. We would also like to especially thank Marion Herens for her support including peer reviewing of this paper and Sanne Bakker for her guidance the methodology.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

APEC	Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation, for policy partnership on food security
APF	AgriProfocus
A4NH	Agriculture for nutrition health
CGAIR	Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FSHD	Food Systems for Healthier diets
GLOPAN	Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition
HLPE	High Level Panel of Experts
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
MALICA	Market and Agriculture for Cities
P4HD	Platforms for Healthier Diets Project
SPEAR	Supporting Policies, Programs, and Enabling Research Through Action
WCDI	Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research
WUR	Wageningen University & Research

Summary

The Platform for Healthier Diets project seeks to understand the roles of multi-stakeholder platforms in strengthening and transforming food systems to deliver healthier diets. In the initial stage of the project, a mapping was carried out to conceptualize multi-stakeholder platforms and identify the various platforms that are active across the food system in the four A4NH focal countries: Ethiopia, Nigeria, Vietnam, and Bangladesh. In the second phase of the project, the focus moved to try to understand how and where the work of the MSPs aligned with the national policy documents that guide the (formal) policy process governing food systems in these countries. In this paper we specifically try to answer two research questions: 1) What are the critical food system themes featured in the national policy documents and how do they contribute to improvement in food systems outcomes with a focus on healthy and nutritious diets? 2) How do the food system themes in the national policy documents relate to the current agendas of existing multi-stakeholder platforms? This report covers the policy and platform mapping for two countries, Ethiopia and Vietnam. The policy and platform mapping for Nigeria and Bangladesh were previously published in another report (see Bakker et al., 2020).

The study found that Ethiopia's policies focus on persistently high levels of maternal and child undernutrition. Policies seeking to address this outcome by focus on intensification and diversification of production, and finding solutions to underlying environmental drivers including reliance on rainfed agriculture and high levels of seasonality leading to post-harvest food waste. Poor infrastructure was identified as significant factors limiting faster delivery of perishable and nutrient dense food foods and high costs of nutrient dense diets hamper household purchasing power resulting in diets low in diversity. In Ethiopia, many of the MSPs are linked directly the formal policy process, leading to a high degree of overlap. There is a particularly strong focus of policies and MSPs on supporting diversified production and consumption.

In Vietnam, food insecurity, especially among ethnic minority communities and in rural areas was a key issue mentioned in policy documents. In terms of food system drivers, climate change and rapid rural-urban migration is leading to fewer farmers feeding an expanding urban population are mentioned as the critical issues. Many of the food systems challenges facing the Vietnamese food system are link to these drivers, with a need for increasingly mechanised process and other improvements to increase productivity especially within the context of climate change. At the same time, increasing distances between producers and consumers is increasing food safety challenges present in the food system. In Vietnam there is a relatively strong overlap between the focus of MSPs and the policies with a particular focus on food safety.

In both countries we see a strong focus of policies and MSPs on nutrition education and supporting consumers to make healthier choices.

Moving forward, perhaps platforms (and eventually policies) in both Ethiopia and Vietnam could adopt a more holistic understanding of food system outcomes, adopting a narrative of dietary quality, incorporating both elements of adequacy and moderation which focus on all population groups. This is starting in Vietnam, with some policies around marketing and promotion of unhealthy food near school, but is still absent from the policy narrative in Ethiopia. Research could support in identifying how to best steer food systems to those which are able to deliver healthy diets for everyone, including both formal policy suggestions as well as ways MSPs can better support food systems. Additionally, policies and MSPs do not currently focus on sustainability as an outcome of the food systems. Environmental drivers are mentioned in policies of both countries (especially erosion and soil degradation in Ethiopia and flooding in Vietnam) but these driver is not carried forward to looking at the broader sustainability outcomes of the food system.

Reflecting on food systems drivers, MSPs in both Vietnam and Ethiopia (especially research focused MSPs) seem to be well positioned to support finding solutions some of the environmental and bio-physical drivers, whether that is through research into new crop varieties or techniques to prevent soil erosion. Supporting policy makers to use new research findings could also be an important role of these MSPs. Many MSPs currently focus economic and social drivers of (adverse) food system outcomes. This role could perhaps be strengthened, and they could also serve as a space to bring more community voices into policy discussions. MSPs are currently active in many parts of the food system in both Vietnam and Ethiopia, and could play an important role in supporting countries to adopt a more food systems based framing to tackle the multiple health and sustainability challenges facing food systems.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Platforms for Healthier Diets project (P4HD) aims to examine and support the role of platforms as mechanisms to strengthen and/or support the processes of scaling up and anchoring food system transformations for healthier diets. The international Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) programme on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health, is a five year program with five flagship programs. Flagship one is Food Systems for Healthier Diets (FSHD), led by Wageningen University & Research. Under Food Systems for Healthier Diets, the Platforms for Healthier Diets (P4HD) project was implemented to assess and promote the role of multi-stakeholders' platforms and multi-stakeholder mechanisms as an avenue to strengthen the process of scaling up and anchoring food systems transformation for healthier diets¹.

The Platform for Healthier Diets study seeks to understand the connections and existing roles of platforms in strengthening and transforming food systems to deliver for healthier diets. In the initial stage of the project, a mapping was carried out to identify the various platforms that are active in promoting interventions in various parts of the food systems which might support countries to be able to better anchor and scale healthy diet initiatives in the four A4NH focal countries: Ethiopia, Nigeria, Vietnam, and Bangladesh. This was done through, a series of web-based and desk-based literature searches through which platforms were identified according a number of key identifiers: shared aim, structure, urgency, functionality, and linkages. A network mapping analysis was performed to visualize relevant platforms and identify the key connectors to the multiple organization's memberships, organization clustering, and platforms affiliated to CGIAR network (Herens, Peters, and Pittore 2018; Bakker, Herens, Pittore, 2019).

After the initial mapping of MSPs was carried out, an additional research question emerged around how the platforms interact with the formal policy process. Do the platforms seek to support the formal policy process? If so, at what stage? For example, are they active in trying to set the agenda and change the narrative around food systems issues? Or are they more active in attempting to ensure existing policies are implemented? Or monitoring implantation? To try to answer this question, a policy scan was undertaken. This report gives an overview of the P4HD policy scan conducted on critical food system themes, drivers, and outcomes featured in the national policy documents, that align with the A4NH objectives in Ethiopia and Vietnam. This follows a similar policy inventory scan that was conducted for Bangladesh and Nigeria (Bakker, Herens, and Pittore 2019).

The subsequent sections present results of the inventory scan for the two remaining A4NH countries; Ethiopia and Vietnam. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: chapter two presents a brief description of the methodology, followed by key the findings in chapter 3, a discussion of the findings in chapter 4, and chapter 5 concludes and gives recommendations for future research directions.

¹ IFPRI' Research Programme on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health 2017-2022: <https://a4nh.cgiar.org>

1.2 Objectives and Research questions

Multi-stakeholder platforms may be one way to support transformative change in the food systems in Ethiopia and Vietnam. This study seeks to achieve the following **objectives**:

- i. To identify the critical food systems themes featured in national policy documents.
- ii. To assess the relationship between the themes in the national policy documents with the current agendas of existing multi-stakeholder platform initiatives.

The specific **research questions** were defined as follows:

- i. What are the critical food system themes featured in the national policy documents and how do they contribute to improvement in food systems outcomes with a focus on healthy and nutritious diets?
- ii. How do the food system themes in the national policy documents relate to the current agendas of existing platform initiatives? Are we able to identify any key gaps?

2 Methodology

2.1 Documents selection

A desk based scan was carried out from June to July 2020, which sought to identify policies related to food systems in Ethiopia and Vietnam. The literature scan was guided by the research question: What are the 'critical food system themes' that can be found in national policy documents? On this basis, documents included were those highlighting the concepts by either explicitly using the terms; nourishing foods, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, food security and nutrition etc. or implicitly using of formulations such as 'healthier diets refers to'.

The selection of the policy documents was based on the study's focus of establishing a connection between the MSP activities and the current national policy agendas at the country level, and how A4NH work connects to both the national policies and MSPs active in both countries. International and regional level policy documents were excluded. The literature scan was restricted to English language publications in Ethiopia. In Vietnam, Vietnamese language publications were also considered and translated using google translate.

In alignment with the previous policy scan of policies in Bangladesh and Nigeria carried out under the A4NH project (Bakker, Herens, and Pittore 2019), two A4NH country documents that were also included in the review. Table 1 contain a list of the documents that were reviewed for this study in the focus countries.

Table 1 List of the food system national policies and A4NH documents scanned for Ethiopia and Vietnam

No.	Name	Abbreviation	Start	End
Ethiopia				
1.	Growth and Transformation Plan	GTPII2019/2020	2019	2020
2.	National Nutrition Program	NNP 2016/2020	2016	2020
3	Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture	NSA2016/2020	2016	2020
4.	National Nutrition Policy	NNP	2016	
5.	A4NH Food and Nutrition policy baseline report	A4NH baseline report 2018	2018	
6.	Productive Safety Net Program	PSNP	2014	
7.	A4NH country note	A4NH CN	2018	
8.	Agriculture sector policy framework	As (PIF)2010-2020	2010	2020
Vietnam				
1.	National Nutrition Strategy	NNS 2011-2020	2011	2020
2.	National Nutrition Action Plan	NNAP 2011	2011	2020
3.	Country Programming Framework	CPF2017-2021	2017	2021
4.	Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards	FAIRS Report	2017	
5.	A4NH baseline Report	A4NH	2018	
6.	Food and Nutrition Policy	FNP	2019	
7.	Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture	NSA	2016	
8.	National Food Security Strategy	NFSS 2011-2020	2011	2020
9	Country Gender Assessment Plan	CGAP	2019	
10	A4NH country note	A4NH CN	2020	

2.2 Analytical Framework

The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (GLOPAN) 2016, food system framework has been used as the conceptual framework to guide our food system analysis (Figure 1). The framework has been used for data analysis of the key food system themes in the two focal countries (See Figure 1).

According to the HLPE revised food system framework, a food system constitutes the entire range of actors and activities involved in agriculture production, processing, distribution/ trade, storage, marketing and retail, consumption, pricing/ purchasing, provisioning, diet quality, labelling, and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are connected (HLPE 2017a). Understanding the provision of food as a complex system is useful for a number of reasons. One is that it supports an understanding of underlying drivers in the food system which impact the food systems outcomes in both positive and negative ways. Adverse food systems outcomes maybe better understood, as they may be caused by a range of factors previously not considered. Finally, a food systems lens may allow a better understanding of how modifying one part of the food system may lead to unintended consequences in other parts of the system.

While there are a large number of food systems approaches available (see (HLPE 2017b; Berkum, Dengerink, and Ruben 2018)), we have chosen to use the Global Panel Framework in this report, in keeping with the conceptual framing used by Bakker et al in the companion report. The original model, as well as the adopted conceptual framing which was used to classify documents can be seen in Figure 1 and 2, respectively.

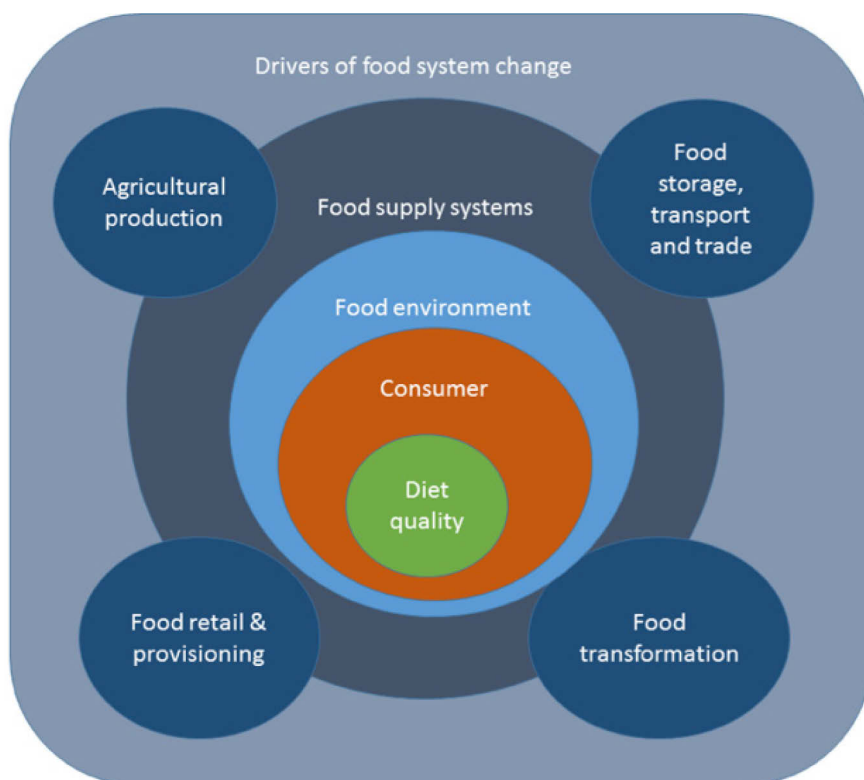


Figure 1 Food system and diets components framework by GLOPAN 2016
Source: GLOPAN 2016

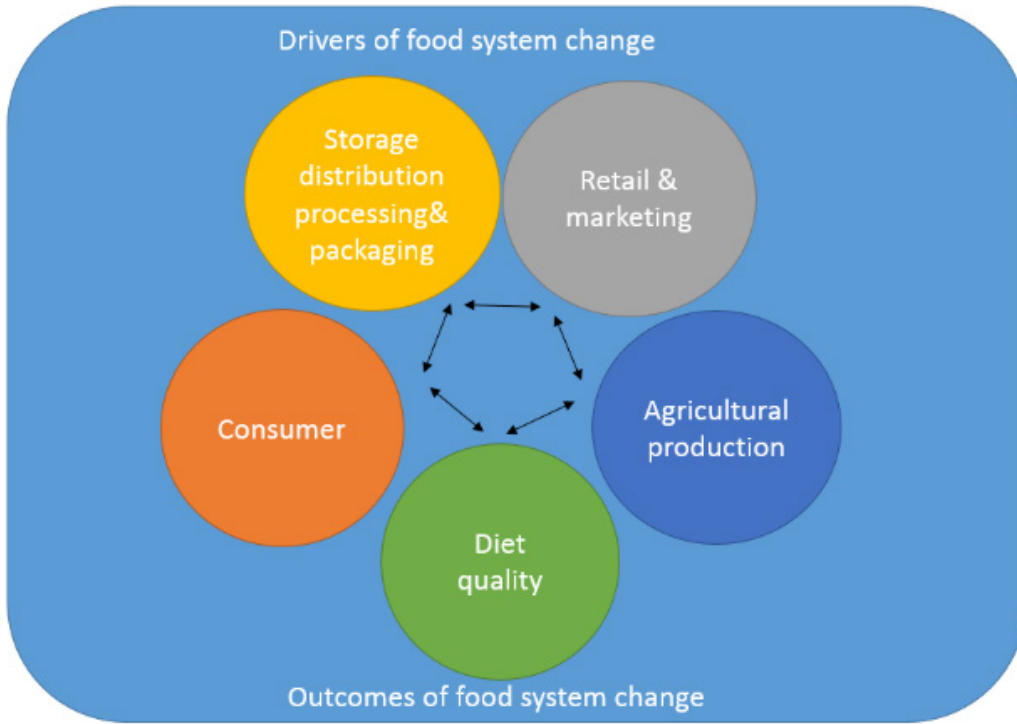


Figure 2 *Adapted model for analysis of documents*

3 The major food system themes

This chapter lays out the key themes that featured in the country policy documents in both Ethiopia and Vietnam. It then explores the multi-stakeholder platforms which are active in both countries and identifies overlaps in the objectives of the multi-stakeholder platforms and the country policy documents. The findings on food systems drivers and outcomes are presented first, followed by the other food system domains. As a result, a distinction is presented between policies that focus on the underlying drivers of the food system and those which focus on the outcomes which are influenced by the multiple food systems drivers.

3.1 Themes identified for Ethiopia

3.1.1 Food systems drivers and outcomes

Table 2 gives a summary of the findings on the food systems drivers. The following key food system drivers were identified by at least two policy documents in Ethiopia; Environmental Drivers

- i. Poor road networks affecting Transportation of food from farms to market (3 docs).
- ii. Degradation of natural resources (2 docs)
- iii. Food production is highly seasonal due to a high reliance on rainfed agriculture (3 docs)
- iv. Environmental challenges were also highlighted including strategies such as promoting climate resilient practices; improving access to improved breeds of livestock, controlled grazing land, use of improved cereal/seed varieties (2 docs).

Socio-economic Drivers

- i. Poor road networks affecting transport of food from farms to markets (3 docs).
- ii. Inadequate knowledge on the importance of healthy diets and the nutrient contents on various foods (3 docs).
- iii. Gender dynamics, and how these affect intrahousehold decision making impact the diets of women and children (3 docs).
- iv. Rapid urbanization and population growth as key drivers contributing to the changing food system (2 docs).

Enabling Environment

- i. Articulated need for strong multisectoral coordination to improve nutrition programs at all levels (2 docs).

The food system outcomes

- i. Burden of overweight, underweight in children below 5 years and obesity among women in reproductive ages in urban areas and increased cases of non-communicable diseases (5 docs).
- ii. High levels of stunting and wasting in children and underweight in women in reproductive age (4 docs).
- iii. Micronutrient deficiency among children under 5, pregnant and lactating mothers deprived of foods rich in vitamin A, iodine and zinc (4 docs).

Table 2 Food system drivers and outcomes in Ethiopia

	Topics	Documents Scanned	Reference
Food system drivers	Rapid urbanization and population growth	A4NH2018 FBN,GTPII2019-2020	(Plan et al., 2019) (<i>International agricultural research</i> , 2018)
	Promote climate resilient practices; improving cross breeds of livestock, controlled grazing land, use of improved cereal/seed varieties	A4NH 2018 CN,GTPII 2019-2020	(CGIAR, 2018), (Plan et al., 2019)
	Degradation of natural resources	A4NH2018,GTPII2019-2020	(CGIAR, 2018), (Plan et al., 2019)
	Seasonality of food production patterns and avoid over reliance on rainfed agriculture	NNP2016-2020,FAIRS REPORT 2017,GTPII2019-2020	(FAO, 2017), (Abdi et al., 2018), (Plan et al., 2019)
	Develop strong multisectoral coordination to improve nutrition programs at all levels	A4NH2018CN,NNP2016-2020	(CGAIR,2018; FAO,2017)
	Unbalanced intra household food distribution	NNP2016-2020, A4NH2018, GTPII2019-2020	(FAO,2017; Plan et al., 2019; CGAIR 2018)
	Transportation of food produce from farms to market is a problem due to poor road networks	CPF2017-2021,GTPII2016-2020,FAIRS REPORT 2017	("Ctry. Partnersh. Framew. Fed. Democr. Repub. Ethiop. Period FY18-FY22," 2017) Plan et al.,2019; Abdi et al.,2018)
	Inadequate knowledge on nutrient specific foods	A4NH2018CN,NNP2016-2020,GTP112016-2020	(CGIAR, 2018), (FAO,2017), (Plan et al., 2019)
Food system outcomes	Burden of overweight, underweight in children below 5 years and obesity among women in reproductive ages in urban areas and increased cases of non-communicable diseases	NNP2016-2020, PSNPIII, A4NH2018CN,NSA2016-2020,	(FAO,2017), (CGIAR, 2018)
	Persistently high levels of stunting and wasting in children and women in reproductive age	A4NH2018CN,NNP2015,NNS2013,NS A2016-2020	(FAO,2017), (CGIAR, 2018),(Kennedy et al., 2015)
	Micronutrient deficiency among children under 5, pregnant and lactating mothers deprived off foods rich in vitamin A, iodine and zinc	NSA2016-2020,NNP2016-2020, A4NH2018	(CGAIR,2018; FAO,2017)

3.1.2 Ethiopia food system domains

Table 3 gives a summary of the findings on the different food systems domains.

Agriculture production

Twelve themes relating to agriculture production were identified for Ethiopia;

- i. Growth of high value crops/livestock and initiation of water harvesting technologies (2 docs).
- ii. Increasing production of diversified and nutrient dense foods (vegetables, fruits, staple crops), and animal source foods (2 docs).
- iii. Improving availability of, and access to, agricultural inputs for efficiency and sustainability through seed certification (2 docs).
- iv. Increasing private sector participation in seed development, multiplication and distribution (3 docs).
- v. Promoting and supporting urban agriculture, community food and vegetable gardens establishment of farmer training centres, community level food production of vegetables and fruits (2 docs).
- vi. Establishment of home and school gardens (2 docs).
- vii. Empowerment of women and enhancing their role in nutrition sensitive agriculture (2 docs).
- viii. Investment in agriculture production and access to nutritious foods, mainstreaming nutrition into agriculture through productive safety nets (PNSP) (2 docs).
- ix. Improving functional value chains, and markets for food groups other than cereals, particularly vegetables, fruit, pulses, and animal-sourced products, alongside further cereal intensification (2 docs).
- x. Strengthening implementation of nutrition-sensitive activities across the sectors (2 docs).

-
- xi. Building resilience of food insecure communities and households by incorporating nutrition sensitive interventions in the productive safety net program (2 docs).
 - xii. Improving natural resource base by promoting fodder production on soil and water production structures, promote zero grazing cut and carry practices and protection of pasture land (2 docs).

Storage, distribution, processing and packaging

The following storage, distribution, processing and packaging related themes were identified in Ethiopia;

- i. Promoting technology for post-harvest food handling, preservation, preparation (4 docs).
- ii. Improving the cold chain for meat exports such as cold storing and packing facilities (2 docs).
- iii. Increasing productivity, market performance and processing along the entire value chain of several key commodities (2 docs).
- iv. Government support for to improved grain storage, at national, cooperative, and household level (2 docs).
- v. Investing on agro-processing through incentivising tax-free imports of machinery, and access to partial initial investment loans from the government bank (3 docs).
- vi. Using Packaging materials, which are safe and suitable for their intended use, and which will safeguard its hygienic, safety, and quality of the food (2 docs).
- vii. High price fluctuation of nutrient dense foods because of limited storage capacity, perishability, transportation and no cold chain storage facilities (2 docs).

Retail and marketing

These areas were identified regarding retail and marketing in Ethiopia;

- i. Strengthening links with local markets to facilitate constant access of both farm inputs and markets (2 docs).
- ii. Regulating marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children (2 docs).
- iii. Improving transportation network/ infrastructure to reduce marketing cost and stimulate market competition and access of food products (2 docs).
- iv. Provisioning of credit facilities (loan acquisition) to enhance market demand for goods and services (3 docs).
- v. Improving market linkages for fruits, vegetables, meat, eggs in rural markets (2 docs).
- vi. Standardization of agricultural products, supply of market information system, expanding and strengthening cooperatives (2 docs).

Consumption level

Nine topics were identified at the consumer level;

- i. Improving nutrition of pregnant/non-pregnant women, lactating and non-lactating mothers to facilitate proper development of infants (2 docs).
- ii. Developing small-scale bee keeping initiatives for women and other vulnerable groups (2 docs).
- iii. Mainstreaming nutrition sensitive agricultural interventions and practices into resource transfer programs and increase women access to resources and inputs (3 docs).
- iv. Strengthening women's awareness on nutrition sensitive production (2 docs).
- v. Increasing consumption of safe, diverse nutrient dense foods at household levels (3 docs).
- vi. Conduct Social and behavioural change communication to prevent harmful traditional practices related to nutrition and dietary diversity (3 docs).
- vii. Promoting access to education consumer demand towards safe and healthier diets (3 docs).
- viii. Promoting school feeding programs to enhance school children nutritional status (2 docs).
- ix. Decrease of food consumption levels due to variation on household income levels especially in female headed households (2 docs).

Diet quality

The following diet quality themes were identified in Ethiopia;

- i. Promoting proper dietary practice that increase fruits and vegetable intake (2 docs).
- ii. Encouraging dietary diversity among women and children under 5 years (2 docs).
- iii. Fortifying food to address micronutrient deficiencies (2 docs).
- iv. Provisioning of food supplementation to prevent acute malnutrition (2 docs).
- v. Promoting nutrition education (2 docs).

Food labelling/composition

Under food labelling/composition three topics were identified as follows;

- i. Ensuring Proper visible labels on pre-packaged foods including name of food, language English/ Amharic, nutrition content and shelf life (2 docs).
- ii. Encouraging consumers to make informed choices about the benefits and content of foods; measures to minimize the impact of marketing on dietary patterns (2 docs).
- iii. Labelling of food with key information about the energy value; protein, carbohydrate and fat content; and the amount of any other nutrient for which a nutrition claim is made (2 docs).

Pricing/ purchasing

At the level of **food pricing and purchasing power** two important themes were identified:

- i. Variability food prices inhibit consumer choice of food, leading to different composition of the food basket (2 docs).
- ii. High market prices on nutrient dense foods such as animal sourced foods, fruits and vegetables, prices of sugar and oil are decreasing (2 docs).

Table 3 Food system domains in Ethiopia

Food system entry point	Topics	Documents Accessed
Food production systems	Growth of high value crops/livestock and initiation of water harvesting technologies	GTPII 2019-2020, NNPII
	Increasing production of diversified and nutrient dense foods vegetables, fruits, and animal source foods	NSA 2016, NNPII 2016-2020
	Improving availability of, and access to, agricultural inputs for improved efficiency and sustainability	NSA2016-2020, GTPII 2020
	Supporting urban agriculture, community and vegetable gardens establishment/farmer training centres, community level food production e.g. vegetables and fruits.	NNP2016-2020, A4NH 2018
	Increasing private sector participation in seed development, multiplication and distribution.	NNP2016-2020, NSA 2016-2020, GTPII 2019-2020
	Home and school feeding gardening	NPR 2016-2017, NNP2
	Empowering women and enhancing their role in nutrition sensitive agriculture	NRP 206-2017, NNP2016-2020
	Investing in agriculture production and access to nutritious foods, mainstreaming nutrition into agriculture through productive safety nets (PNSP)	A4NH2018, NNP2
	Diversifying and increasing production of local demand, functional value chains, and markets for— food groups other than cereals, particularly vegetables, fruit, pulses, and animal-sourced products, alongside further cereal intensification	NNP2016-2020, A4NH2018
	Strengthening implementation of nutrition-sensitive production across the sectors	NNP2013, GTPII 2019-2020
	Building resilience of communities and households by integrating nutrition sensitive intervention in the productive safety net programs	NNS 2016, NNP2 2016-2020
	Improving the natural resource base by promoting fodder production on soil and water production structures, promote zero grazing cut and carry practices and protection of pasture land	NSA2016-2020, GTPII 2019-2020

Food system entry point	Topics	Documents Accessed
Storage, processing, distribution and packaging	Promoting technology for post-harvest food handling, preservation, preparation	NSA 2016-2020, NNPII 2016-2020, A4NH2017NOTE, NSA2012-2020
	Improving the cold chain for meat exports such as cold storing and packing facilities.	NNP2016-2020, A4NH 2017
	Increasing productivity, market performance and processing along the entire value chain of several key commodities	GTPII2019-2020, NSA 2016-2020
	Government to invest in supporting grain storage, at national, cooperative, and household level	A4NH2018, GTPII 2019-2020
	Investing in agro-processing through incentivising tax-free imports of machinery cheap labour, and access to partial initial investment loans from the government bank	A4NH2018, GTPII2019-2020, NNP2016-2020
	Using Packaging materials, which are safe and suitable for their intended use, and which will safeguard its hygienic, safety, and quality of the food (2 docs).	FAIRS REPORT2018, GTPII 2019-2020
	High price fluctuation of nutrient dense foods because of limited storage capacity, perishability, transportation and no cold chain storage facilities	A4NH 2017, NNPII 2016-2020
Retail and marketing	Strengthening links with local markets to facilitate constant access of farm inputs and produce market	NNP2016-2020, GTPII2019-2020
	Regulating marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children	NNP2016-2020, NPR2016-2017
	Improving transportation network/ infrastructure to reduce marketing cost and stimulate market competition for access of food products	AS (PIF)2010-2020, GTP PLAN
	Improving the market for nutrient dense foods including fruits, vegetables, meat, eggs in rural areas	A4NH2018, NSA2016-2020
	Provisioning of credit facilities (loan acquisition) to enhance market demand for more goods and services.	AS (PIF)2010-2020, GTPII PLAN
	Standardizing of agricultural products, supply of market information system, expanding and strengthening cooperatives	AS (PIF)2010-2020, NSA2016-2020
Consumption	Improving nutrition of pregnant/non-pregnant women, lactating and non-lactating mothers to facilitate proper development of infants	NNP2016-2020, NSA 2016-2020
	Developing small-scale bee keeping initiatives for women and other vulnerable groups	NNP2016-2020, GTPII 2016
	Mainstreaming nutrition sensitive agricultural interventions and practices into resource transfer programs, and increasing women's access to resources and inputs	NSA2016-2020, NNP 2019-2020, AGPII
	Strengthening women/gender awareness on nutrition sensitive production	AGPII, NNP2016-2020
	Increasing consumption of safe, diverse nutrient dense foods at household levels	NSA2016-2020, A4NH2018, NNP2019-2020
	Conducting Social and behavioural change communication to reduce harmful traditional practices related to nutrition and dietary diversity	NSA2016-2020, NNP2016-2020, A4NH2018
	Promoting access to education on consumer demand towards safe and healthier diets, Media campaigns on healthy diets.	A4NH2017, NPR 2016-2017
	Promoting school feeding programs to enhance school children nutritional status	NNP2016-2020, NSA2016-2020

Food system entry point	Topics	Documents Accessed
	Low levels of dietary diversity due to variation on household income levels especially in female headed households	A4NH2018,NSA 2016-2020
Diet quality	Promoting proper dietary practice that includes fruits and vegetable intake	NNP2016-2020, A4NH2018
	Dietary diversity among women and children under 5 years	A4NH2018,NNS2016-2020
	Food fortification to address micronutrient deficiencies, food supplementation to prevent acute malnutrition, nutrition education	NSA2016-2020,A4NH2019,
Labelling	Improved labelling of pre-packaged foods including name of food, language (English/ Amharic), nutrition content and shelf life	FAIRS REPORT2017,A4NH2019
	Influencing consumers to make informed choices about the benefits and content of foods; measures to minimize the impact of marketing on unhealthy dietary patterns	FNP2019, FAIRS REPORT 2017
	Improved labelling of energy value; protein, carbohydrate and fat content; and the amount of any other nutrient for which a nutrition claim is made	FAIRS REPORT 2017,FNP2019
Pricing and purchasing	Food price variability inhibits consumer choice, leading to different composition of the food basket	A4NH2018,FAIRS REPORT 2017
	High market prices on nutrient dense foods such as animal sourced foods, fruits and vegetables, prices of sugar and oil is on the decline.	A4NH 2017,NSA 2016-2020

3.1.3 Synthesis of key food system themes in Ethiopia inventory

From the analysis of food system drivers presented in Table 2, there are a number of underlying drivers which impact the overall food system in Ethiopia. This have been coded as environmental drivers, socioeconomic divers, and factors with contribute the overall enabling environment in which the food system operates.

Key environmental drivers of the Ethiopian food system mentioned in the policy documents include, at the production side, failure to adopt climate resilient practices, including use of improved varieties, reduces food availability as well as farmer’s reliance to climatic and other shocks. A second driver on the production side highlighted is an overreliance on rain fed agriculture, contributing to seasonal post-harvest losses and forcing many farmers sell when the prices are low, and resulting in high levels of food loss. In terms of transportation and distribution, poor infrastructure development, especially roads, influence access to markets and results in high levels of food waste in Ethiopia. This is also influenced by the highly mountainous and challenging terrain.

In terms of socio-economic drivers, at the national level, rapid urbanization in Ethiopia means that that the country is shifting from a situation where the majority of people work in (small scale) agriculture to a situation where the rural population will need to be able to feed an increasingly large urban population. At the household level, disparities between genders in terms decisions around both production and consumption at the household level is a key driver of unfavourable food systems outcomes including high levels of maternal and child undernutrition.

Moving from food systems drivers to looking at the food production system, in Ethiopia the largest number of policies were found which focus on primary production system. These range from policies which focus on more technical aspects, such as access to inputs, through to policies which focus on more social aspects such as supporting women’s participation in production decisions. There is also a strong focus on promoting production of more nutrient dense crops, including fruits, vegetables and legumes. The some production policies also mention some of the underlying food systems drivers,

especially environmental drivers of the food system, with a number of policies linked to promoting improved practices to preserve the natural resource base and reduce the environmental impacts of agriculture.

Policies related to Storage, processing, distribution and packaging of foods mainly focused on development of infrastructure, especially cold chains to limit food loss and waste, especially for meat and other highly perishable foods. Government investment and other financial incentives are suggested to improve storage and processing facilities.

In terms of retail and marketing; policies indicate that access to markets seems to be a key priority, including supporting structures such as access to finance and access to market information for rural farmers. There is less focus on marketing, perhaps reflecting the relative low level of involvement of formal food retailers, especially outside urban areas.

There are a number of policies which focus on consumption, especially those which target the consumption patterns of women and children. Many of these policies, like those that focus on production, also encourage diversification of diets (often linking household production of diverse foods to increased diversity of consumption). Gender relations are also mentioned as an important entry point for addressing household nutritional, with several policies seeking to addressing inequalities in terms of women's involvement in decision making around household consumption.

There are labelling policies requiring products to be labelled in local languages with information about the macro and micronutrient composition of the food. In the pricing and purchasing category, pricing has been mentioned as factor that influences consumer choice, food prices volatility and high prices for nutrient specific foods limit consumption. Most of the policy documents focus on individual choice and consumer behaviour to improve diets, rather than policies which seek to address consumer choice from a broader food systems perspective.

3.2 Themes identified for Vietnam

3.2.1 Food systems drivers and outcomes

Table 4 gives a summary of the findings on the food systems drivers outcome. The following key food system drivers were identified in Vietnam;

Environmental Drivers

- i. Increasing capacities, expertise and resources for the local authority to deal with climate change effects (3 docs).

Socio-economic

- i. Improving access to agricultural credit, especially to formal banking services which is leading to high levels of rural-urban migration driven by productivity and low income from agricultural work. (3 docs).
- ii. Supporting nutrition education and consumer awareness to increase knowledge on nutritional value of foods (3 docs).
- iii. Promoting healthy food environments in schools, including healthy meals and limiting the sale and advertising of 'junk food' in proximity to schools and playgrounds (3 docs).
- iv. Improving diets for poor and vulnerable people (HIV/AIDS, elderly, women etc), (3 docs).

Enabling Environment

- i. Supporting the implementation of nutritional support programs in rural areas (2 docs).
- ii. Supporting Multisectoral nutritional activities (MARD, MOH,MOE), including with budget allocation for nutritional programs (2 docs).
- iii. Increasing food security with focus on poverty alleviation, malnutrition and food safety (2 docs).
- iv. Scaling-up nutritional support programs for children by mobilizing other sectors including health, water sanitation, education and social protection services (2 docs).

Outcomes

Eight Key food system outcomes were identified in Vietnamese policies:

- i. Fewer farmers remaining in rural areas must feed the expanding urban population (2 docs).
- ii. Malnutrition levels are much higher in rural than urban area (3 docs).
- iii. Micronutrient deficiencies are common among pregnant women/children under 5 (3 docs).
- iv. Limited nutritional knowledge among local authorities and community (2 docs).
- v. Lack of relevant nutritional knowledge among women in rural communities (2 docs).
- vi. Undernutrition is a challenge among ethnic minority communities in Vietnam (3 docs).
- vii. Inability to access or afford safe and nutritious food among urban populations (2 docs).
- viii. Low consumption of micronutrient dense foods such including vegetables, fish, eggs, and fruits both in rural and urban areas (2 docs).

Table 4 Food system drivers and outcomes Vietnam

	Topics	Documents scanned	References
Food system drivers	Supporting the role out of nutrition support programmes and networks to rural provinces.	NNS 2011/20202, CPF 2017-2021	(River & Secretariat, 2017)
	Capacitating and resourcing local authority to deal with climate change effects	A4NH Baseline report, CPF2017-2021, FNP2019	(River & Secretariat 2017),(Pham et al., 2017)
	Increasing food security with focus on poverty alleviation, malnutrition and food safety	CPF2017/2021,A4NH 2018	(River & Secretariat, 2017;CGAIR 2018)
	Supporting climate change adaptation through reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture and rural development	CPF 2017-2020, NNS 2016-2020	
	Increasing Farmers' access to agricultural credit, especially to formal banking services in rural areas with an aim to reduce rural-urban migration	NSA 2016-2020 ³ , CPF2017-2021, NNS 2010-2020 ⁴	(River & Secretariat, 2017);
	Increasing consumer awareness through nutrition education and consumer awareness/behaviour change	NNS 2012-2020 ⁵ ,NSA 2016-2020, A4NH2018	(CGAIR, 2018)
	Promoting healthy food environments in schools, including healthy meals and limiting the sale and advertising of 'junk food' in proximity to schools and playgrounds.	CPF 2017-2020,NNS 2011-2020,FNP 2019	(River & Secretariat, 2017)
	Scaling- up nutritional support programs for children by mobilizing support systems such as health, water sanitation, education and social protection services	FNP2019,CPF2017-2021, NSA 2011-2020	(River & Secretariat, 2017)
	Improving diets for poor and vulnerable people e.g. those living with HIV/AIDS, elderly, women etc.	A4NH baseline report, NSA2016, CPF 2017-2021	(Pham et al., 2017),(River & Secretariat, 2017)
	Food system outcomes	Micronutrient deficiencies are common among pregnant women/children under 5	NNS2011/2022,NFSS 2011,CGAP 2019 ⁶
Malnutrition rates are higher in rural areas resulting		A4NH2019, NNS 2011/2020, NSA 2011-2020	(Pham et al., 2017)
High levels of undernutrition among ethnic minority communities.		A4NH2019,NNS 2011-2020,CGAP2019	(Pham et al., 2017)
Inability to access or afford safe and nutritious food among urban populations.		A4NH 2019, NNS 2012-2020	
Low consumption of nutrient rich foods such as vegetables, fish, eggs, fruits etc. both in rural and urban areas		NNAP2011-2020,NSA 2011-2020	

² <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/node/11519>

³ <https://knowledge4food.net/research-project/gcp3-scaling-up-nsa-initiatives-in-vietman-and-laos/>

⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/viet-nam/viet-nam%E2%80%99s-2011-2020-nutrition-strategy-improve-nutrition-status-mothers-and>

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-at704e.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca6503en/ca6503en.pdf>

3.2.2 Vietnam food system domains

Table 5 gives a summary of findings on the food system domains in Vietnam

Agriculture production

Seven themes relating to agriculture production were identified for Vietnam;

- i. Diversifying local food production of nutrient dense crops including through vegetables cultivation, animal husbandry and aquaculture (2 docs).
- ii. Increasing food production through upgrading agriculture production systems (2 docs).
- iii. Improving efficiency of food production and income generation through improved farmer training on agriculture management practices (2 docs).
- iv. Promoting home garden practices to provide safe and nutritious vegetable (leafy sweet potatoes/ Chinese Broccoli), (3 docs).
- v. Enhancing the knowledge of rural residents and producers in order to modernize agro-production, rural livelihood activities (3 docs).
- vi. Supporting the use of biotechnology to develop new crop and animal varieties (2 docs).

Storage, distribution, processing, and packaging

In Vietnam, three themes on storage, distribution, processing, and packaging were identified;

- i. Promoting local food processing, utilization, circulation and distribution of safe food (2 docs).
- ii. Improving the food processing industry by develop new food processing technology to minimize post-harvest food waste (2 docs).
- iii. Promoting Innovative technology in harvesting, seed selection, preservation and quality control (3 docs).

Retail and Marketing

These areas were identified regarding retail and marketing in Vietnam;

- i. Facilitating market access for domestic rice production (2 docs).
- ii. Institutionalizing the state's ability to determine market prices through controlling exports (2 docs).
- iii. Promoting inclusive and efficient delivery channels for agricultural outputs—through commodity value chains to facilitate marketing of agricultural products.(2 docs).
- iv. Promoting market research on fruits and vegetables and developing new products customized for each target market and satisfy local consumers (2 docs).

Diet quality

Themes relating to diet quality in Vietnam include;

- i. Increasing dietary diversity (3 docs).
- ii. Regulating fortification of food products including complementary foods, vegetable oils, edible salts and wheat flour with micronutrients (3 docs).
- iii. Training on diet diversity. (2 docs).

Consumption level

At the consumer level, the following themes were identified in Vietnamese policies;

- i. Supporting mothers nutritionally in the prenatal/post-natal phases including promoting and supporting exclusive breastfeeding to children under 6 months (2 docs).
- ii. Strengthening home gardening practices to promote consumption of nutrient dense foods (3 docs).

Food pricing/ provisioning

The following food pricing and provisioning themes were identified in Vietnam;

- i. Incentivizing the provision of healthy, convenient, affordable and fortified foods (2 docs).
- ii. Subsidizing high food prices on staple farm produce such as rice, negotiation of trade barriers removal and finding niche market for fresh vegetables and fruits (3 docs).

Table 5 Vietnam food system domain

Food system Entry Point	Topics	Documents Scanned
Agriculture Production System	Diversifying local food production e.g. vegetables, animal husbandry and aquaculture	NNS 2011/2020,NSA 2011-2020
	Increasing local food production by upgrading agriculture production systems, using improved seed inputs	NFS 2011-2016, CPF 2017-2021
	Improving efficiency of food production and income generation through training farmers on agriculture management practices	NFS 2011-2020,CPF 2017-2021
	Promoting home garden practices to provide safe and nutritious vegetable (leafy sweet potatoes/ Chinese Broccoli),	NFS 2011-2016, NSA 2011-2020, A4NH baseline report
	Strengthening use of biotechnology for developing new crop and animal varieties and expand production processes. Develop large scale commodity production in the crop sector	CPF 2017-2021, NFS 2011-2020
Storage, distribution, processing/ packaging	Promoting local food processing, utilization, and distribution of safe food	NNS 2001/2020,NNAP 2011-2020
	Improving food processing and developing new technology that minimize post- harvest food waste.	NSA2016-2020,NFS2011-2016
	Promoting innovative technology in harvesting, seed selection, preservation and quality control	FFTC-Agriculture policy platform articles, NFS 2011-2020, CPF 2017-2020
Retail and Marketing	Facilitating market access for domestic rice production	NFS 2011-2020, NSA 2011-2020
	Institutionalizing the state's ability to determine market prices through controlling exports	CPF 2017-2021, NFS 2011-2020
	Promoting inclusive and efficient delivery channels for agricultural outputs—through commodity value chains to facilitate marketing of agricultural products	A4NH, NFS 2011-2021
	Promoting market research (fruits/ vegetables) and product development customized for each target market	CPF 2017-2020, NSA 2011-2020
Diet quality	Increasing dietary diversity to improve diet quality especially consumption of key micronutrients	A4NH2019, NNS 2011-2020, NSA 2011-2020
	Regulating fortification of food key commodities including vegetable oils, edible salts and wheat flour as well as complementary foods for young children	NNS2011-2020, A4NH2018
	Training on diet diversity, food fortification and food safety.	NFS 2011-2016,NSA 2016-2020
Consumer	Supporting mothers nutritionally in the prenatal/post-natal phases including promoting and supporting exclusive breastfeeding to children under 6 months	NNS 2011/2020, NSA 2011-2020
	Strengthen home gardening practices to promote consumption of nourishing foods	NFS 2011-2016, NSA 2011-2020, A4NH report
Food pricing and provision	Incentivizing the provision of healthy, convenient, affordable and fortified foods	A4NH 2018, FNP 2019, NSA 2016-2020
	Subsidizing key staple foods such as rice, negotiation of trade barriers, and finding niche market for fresh vegetables and fruits	NSA 2016-2020,NFS 2011-2016

3.2.3 Synthesis of the key food system themes in Vietnam

The majority of policy documents focused on socio-economic drivers and their impact on the food system. This included high levels of rural-urban migration meaning that fewer rural farmers must support a growing urban population. In terms of Environmental drivers, the lack of resources (human/ financial) to deal with climate change was highlighted in a number of policy documents. Policies in

Vietnam also focused specifically on vulnerable groups in society, including ethnic minorities and those living with chronic diseases such as HIV. Policies explicitly mentioned underlying drivers of food system, including poverty, and the need for poverty alleviation.

A number of policies also looked at the enabling environment and challenges related to policy implementation in rural Vietnam including low budget allocation and challenges link to multisector coordination.

Policies on primary production stressed the need for increased efficiency of agriculture which can be achieved through improved production practices including the use of new (hybrid) varieties as well as increased mechanisation of agriculture. Food quality, as well as quantity is also mentioned in policies through Promotions of home gardens, as well as other ways to stimulate more diverse production, as well as a specific focus on food safety.

Policies on the storage and distribution focused on policy innovations to improve food processing and minimize food lost. Ensuring food safety was again mentioned as a key priority.

Retail and marketing policies focused on controlling food prices, by limiting food imports and providing state support to aid farmers to access domestic markets, with a specific focus on minimizing post-harvest loss. Policies also focused on developing inclusive and efficient value chains, especially for key commodities such as rice.

In terms of diet quality, policies stressed increasing dietary diversity through consumers education, promoting fortification of complementary foods for young children as well as staple foods, including vegetable oils, wheat flour, and edible salts. Food safety was again emphasized in policies on diet quality.

4 Discussion

4.1 Alignment between Food Systems for Healthier Diets A4NH country documents and national policy documents

This section gives an overview of the A4NH country baseline documents used for food system topics identification, and highlights which elements of the national policy documents are prioritized by the A4NH policies in Ethiopia and Vietnam.

4.1.1 Ethiopia

A4NH policy documents highlight the key food system outcomes seen in Ethiopia including high levels of undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, especially for women of reproductive age and young children. The A4NH policies specifically take onboard the focus on the major food system drivers including rapid urbanization, natural resource degradation. In terms of primary production, A4NH has prioritized support for increased production of diversified foods, focusing on increased production of diversified foods at the household level. A4NH policy documents also prioritize improved market access for farmers in rural areas, which is supported with storage facilities and improved infrastructure such as cold chain facilities as well as support for increase food fortification. The A4NH policy documents have also chosen to prioritize consumer education including for recipients of social protection grants as well as for other consumer demographics.

4.1.2 Vietnam

Vietnamese policies mention that rural-urban migration contributes to low productivity in the rural areas; this has been captured as a key food system driver in the A4NH work. The disconnect between rural and urban areas also comes out in several of the national policy documents which highlight key challenges in delivering nutrition programmes in rural areas, as a result of low levels of staff capacity and limited resources for nutrition programmes. The policy documents and A4NH policies maintain a specific focus on vulnerable groups especially ethnic minorities and those living in rural areas, where rates of malnutrition remain persistently high.

National policies have a strong focus on the modernization (mechanization, introduction of better varieties, etc) of agriculture. A4NH documents choose to support specific issues related to nutrition sensitive agriculture within the overall agricultural policies. Likewise, the national policies are focused on issues around post-harvest handling, where the focus again is on increased mechanization and efficiency with the aim of reducing post-harvest losses which has not been identified as a priority area for support in the A4NH documents. In terms of marketing and retail, A4NH prioritizes improved functioning of distribution channels, especially for fruit and vegetables, which is in line with the A4NH focus on improvising access to nutritious foods. The national level policy documents also focus on setting and prices ensuring markets for key national commodities (rice), which would not be an appropriate area for A4NH to work in as it a role government actors should support. In terms of diet quality, there is significant overlap in terms of the A4NH policies and government policies, both of which focus on unhealthy food environments, low consumption of micronutrient rich foods and over-consumption of carbohydrates. At the consumer level, nation policies have a much broader focus, including nutrition sensitive agriculture but also issues such as ensure a supportive environment for breastfeeding. As would be expect for a project focusing on agriculture and nutrition linkages, A4NH policies only mention home gardening and increase household level production of nutritious foods but does not work on broader nutrition issues with stronger links to other sectors

4.2 How do the food system themes relate to the platform initiatives?

Having reviewed the policies which guide food systems efforts in both countries, the next stage of the analysis was to come back to the existing multisectoral platforms that were scanned in the first phase of this work. This work involved conceptualizing multi-stakeholder platforms and then applying this conceptualization to identify platforms active in various areas of the food system. For a full description of the methodology see Herens, M., Peters, B., & Pittore, K. 2018).

Multi-stakeholder collaborative efforts provide a platform for achieving common shared goals. This section will seek to answer the second research question on how the platform activities relate to the current national policy agendas in Ethiopia and Vietnam. In particular, we were interested to understand if the platforms seek to support the formal policy process, and if so, at what stage? For example, are they active in trying to set the agenda and change the narrative around food systems issues, for example by trying to get new issues included in the policy discussion? Or are they more active in attempting to ensure policies are implemented? This section seeks to understand the links between the activities of the MSPs in Ethiopia and Vietnam and national level policies related to food systems issues.

4.2.1 Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the platform identification study showed that the critical focus of the majority of multi-stakeholder platforms in Ethiopia was based on reducing the prevalence of stunting, underweight, micronutrient deficiencies and wasting attributable to malnutrition, (some of these platforms include Nutrition Development Partners Forum, National Nutrition Coordination Body and Ethiopia Civil Society Coalition) ⁷. This focus is aligned with the government policies, which also identified undernutrition as a key challenge of public health concern in Ethiopia⁸.

Many of the platforms (Agriprofocus, Ethiopian home garden network, the Food and Nutrition Society of Ethiopia) focus on nutrition sensitive agriculture. Nutrition sensitive agriculture is also a key theme in the national policy documents (National Nutrition Program, National Nutrition Policy, Growth and Transformation Plan, and Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture Policy) and interestingly the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural resources is the most prominent connect between various platforms, suggesting that the platforms are very much supporting the government to implement these policies.

At the consumption level, the platforms and policies focus primarily on women and children, with less focus on improving nutrition for the general population. The Food Fortification Working Group is the only platform that specifically focuses on addressing diet quality standards for both young and old populations through salt iodisation, flour and food fortification in Ethiopia.

Food safety and quality are a major problem mentioned by both platforms as well as in the policy scan. The multisectoral approach has been highlighted as a mechanism to address post-harvest management practices. There is less visibility of the multi-stakeholder platforms involved in ensuring appropriate technology is developed to minimize food waste.

Nutrition education is a common theme that is featured in both the platform identification study (Nutrition Development Partner's Forum, UN REACH, Ethiopian Civil Society Coalition, Ethiopian Home Garden Network, and the National Nutrition Coordination body) and food system policy mapping. Here the platforms seem to be reinforcing the policy to intensify education awareness campaigns around issues including diversification of local food production, market availability of healthy or nutrient - dense foods, food labelling, and certification schemes. Given that many of the multi-stakeholder platforms in Ethiopia have government ministries as members, this overlap between policy and MSP work is expected.

⁷ <https://scalingupnutrition.org/news/ethiopia-commits-to-ending-under-nutrition-by-2030-with-the-seqota-declaration/>

⁸ <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/Demographic%20Health%20Survey%202011%20Ethiopia%20Final%20Report.pdf>

Gender and climate change, however, are not as prominent in the policies. This is well reflected on the activities/ roles of AgriProFocus platform which revolve around gender mainstreaming and climate resilient practices.

There are also a number of platforms including the Disaster Risk Management Agricultural Task Force and the Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit which focus on humanitarian coordination, which was not a topic identified in the policy scan. However, this may related to the fact that the policy scan focused on broader food system factors, and may have missed factors which are linked to, but not directly driving the food system, especially at a national level including humanitarian crisis. It may also have been that the policies guiding support to humanitarian work are separate from broader food systems policies.

4.2.2 Vietnam

For the platform identification study in Vietnam, the aspect of 'healthy diet' was found to be the key focus of The Steering Committee of the National Nutrition⁹, this was also in line with several of the national policy documents including the National Nutrition Strategy, the Country Programming Framework and the Food and Nutrition Policy. However, the majority of platforms focus on issues of fighting malnutrition, rather than working on issues of healthy diets per se.

Many of the MSPs focused on issues of food safety including VINASTAS and the Food Safety Working Group. While food safety is mentioned as an issue in the National Nutrition Strategy and the National Nutrition Action Plan, there is a lack of concrete policy interventions to adequately tackle food safety challenges.

There seems to be a strong correlation between the environmental drivers highlighted in policy documents and the priorities of MSPs. Climate change and related issues of environmental degradation featured both in the policy documents including the National Nutrition Strategy and National Nutrition Plan as well as being a key priority for a number of research led platforms: three CIAT led research platforms, one exploring the link between agrobiodiversity and Dietary Diversity. A second, Breeding Better Crops, works on developing superior farmer preferred varieties, and a third, the Common Microbial Biotechnology Platform, the led by the Vietnam agricultural genetics institute, CIAT and CIRAD carries out research on issues of soil degradation. Rapid rural-urban migration is also seen as a major driver of food system driver, in both national policy documents including the Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture Policy, Country Policy Framework, and National Nutrition Strategy etc as well as a priority of MALICA platform which seeks to find solutions to challenges- and opportunities in food systems as a result of rapid urbanization.

4.3 Reflections on the methodology

The underlying limitations of this research study are that it was an internet-based desk-review study. For the platform mapping, research was limited to platforms with visible web/internet presence and thus excluding offline platforms. For the policy mapping the focus was on national level policies that were published online. With this approach there is a possibility important information was left out due to offline nature for some of the platforms and policies. However in-country workshops to validate the findings of the platform mapping were held in three of the four countries to ensure our findings matched the understanding of key in-country stakeholders. Over the course of the four year that the project ran, some platforms ceased to exist, and new platforms were established. This is the nature multi-stakeholder platforms, and not a limitation of our study per se but a reflection of the dynamic nature of MSPs.

⁹ <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/a4nh-flagship-1-food-systems-healthier-diets>

5 Conclusion and recommendations

This study uses the food system framework as a lens for examining the alignment of multi-stakeholder platforms active in Ethiopia and Vietnam and the national policy agendas guiding both country's food systems.

Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, malnutrition remains a wide-spread challenge throughout the population, and both policy documents (the Secota Declaration) and MSPs focus on reducing or eliminating malnutrition. The narrative has not yet shifted to a discussion of healthier diets as such. Low dietary diversity is presented as a key challenge facing the country and policies and MSPs have a strong focus on increasing production diversity, with an aim to increase dietary diversity for both rural and urban populations. A reliance on rain fed agriculture in most parts of the country leads to both seasonality of diets and high levels of food loss, worsened by weak market connectivity and poor infrastructure including roads and storage facilities. Policies focus on improving infrastructure, while MSPs seek to support farmers with improved access to market information. There are policies which support improved labelling of foods, however a number of policy gaps remain, for example food based dietary guidelines for the Ethiopian population still do not exist. Policies and MSPs both focus on nutrition education and behaviour change communication as a way of addressing persistently high levels of undernutrition in the country.

While policy document do not make use of a full food systems framing, many of the underlying food systems drivers are policy priorities, especially a range of environmental drivers (soil degradation and erosion, water scarcity, etc). Underlying socio-economic drivers are also discussed in policies and by MSPs, both in relation to household purchasing power as well as underlying gender norms and values which influence dietary outcomes.

Overall there is quite a high overlap between policies and platform work, suggesting that in Ethiopia platforms are supporting the implementation of policies, rather than setting the agenda. This is an expected finding given the strong role of the central government in planning especially for agricultural sector, the high overlap between MSP membership and the formal policy process (many ministries are members of various MSPs) and the generally weaker links to private sector.

Vietnam

In Vietnam, the picture of the food system, as presented through the policy documents and MSPs, is quite different from the Ethiopian food system. Undernutrition is more concentrated in rural areas and those from more disadvantaged backgrounds, including ethnic minorities. Policies and platforms are trying to address challenges of a shrinking rural population who need to feed an increasingly urban one. This decrease in the number of farmers coupled with environmental challenges is leading to an increased focus on mechanization and intensification of food production. Increasing distances between supplier and consumer raises challenges linked to food safety, which are another key priority of Vietnamese policies and MSPs.

The policies in Vietnam uniquely focus on ensuring national level food security, with the polices to actively control the price of key commodities and regulate imports and exports which is something not seen as strongly in other country policy documents.

While the overall foods systems issues in Vietnam may differ from those that are prioritized in Ethiopia, policies to increases consumption of nutritious foods are remarkably similar in both countries, including behavior change communication, with a special focus on women and young children, and micronutrient fortification. In Vietnam policies also seem to be increasingly concerned with moderation, introducing policies to, for example, regulate marketing of unhealthy foods near schools.

Where are MSPs and Policies active in both countries? Where are the gap?

Interestingly, examining the policies in Ethiopia and Vietnam illustrates the types of food systems that are present in those countries: in Ethiopia a more traditional food systems with a larger rural population and a greater percentage of the population working in agriculture; in Vietnam, a transitioning food system, focusing on intensification with fewer farmers needing to feed an expanding urban population.

The close alignment between the MSPs examined in this study and the policy documents in these two countries suggested that MSPs are likely to be playing the largest role in supporting the implementation of policies, rather than setting the agenda. Given this overlap, it seems that there could be a role for MSPs to support specific policy issues, for example food safety in Vietnam or improved market linkages in Ethiopia, where formal policy structures and mechanisms are unlikely to be able to work effectively without engaging with multiple actors across the food system. Effective multi-stakeholder collaboration was also highlighted in policies for both countries, and is an area where having strong and active MSPs could certainly play a central role.

Recommendations to support a transition to a Food Systems framing:

In terms of food systems outcomes, MSPs and policies seem to maintain a focus on the challenges of combating undernutrition and hunger in various populations. Moving forward, perhaps platforms (and eventually policies) in both Ethiopia and Vietnam could adopt a more holistic understanding of food system outcomes, adopting a narrative of dietary quality, incorporating both elements of adequacy and moderation which focus on all population groups. Research could support in identifying how to best steer food systems to those which are able to deliver healthy diets for everyone. Additionally, policies and MSPs do not currently focus on sustainability as an outcome of the food systems in either country. Environmental drivers are mentioned in policies of both countries (especially erosion and soil degradation in Ethiopia and flooding in Vietnam) but these driver is not carried forward to looking at the broader sustainability outcomes of the food system.

Reflecting on food systems drivers, MSPs in both Vietnam and Ethiopia (especially research focused MSPs) seem to be well positioned to support finding solutions some of the environmental and bio-physical drivers, whether that is through research into new crop varieties or techniques to prevent soil erosion. Supporting policy makers to use new research findings could also be an important role of these MSPs. Many MSPs currently focus economic and social drivers of (adverse) food system outcomes. This role could perhaps be strengthened, and they could also serve as a space to bring more community voices into policy discussions. MSPs are currently active in many parts of the food system in both Vietnam and Ethiopia, and could play an important role in supporting countries to adopt a more food systems based framing to tackle the multiple health and sustainability challenges facing food systems.

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