

Government Partnership for Food Safety Culture

How Feed the Future Business Drivers for Food Safety Partners with the Government of Ethiopia for a Culture of Food Safety

Safe food supports national economies and global trade, in addition to contributing to food security, nutrition, and sustainable development. Governments can facilitate a culture of food safety by creating clear food safety regulations, policies and an enabling environment where small and medium-sized enterprises can thrive. Ethiopia's government has been continuously upgrading its food safety laws and regulations to meet the requirements of both international buyers and its fast-growing food retail and wholesale establishments. Despite improvements to the regulatory structure, many small and medium-sized businesses' food safety systems are not yet developed enough to meet acceptable standards.

Feed the Future Business Drivers for Food Safety (BD4FS), funded by USAID and implemented by Food Enterprise Solutions (FES), is working with growing food businesses¹ (GFBs) in Ethiopia to accelerate the adoption of food safety practices. Ethiopian GFBs face challenges in improving their food safety, including a lack of training opportunities, affordable certification services, and infrastructure for food safety such as clean water, washing facilities, and consistent electricity. Information regarding food safety regulations can be hard to access and understand, and there is a lack of incentives for GFBs to improve food safety. BD4FS is actively addressing these challenges by partnering with GFBs to build food safety capacity, which will drive a spread effect of improved food safety for Ethiopian domestic markets of perishable foods.

To create a framework for sustained growth of food safety culture, BD4FS formed a partnership with the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI). MoTRI is one of the three Governmental Agencies that are responsible for food safety and quality control. In May of 2023, BD4FS signed an MOU with MoTRI for collaboration on improving food safety and quality of SMEs, agreeing to collaborate on efforts including:

- Providing training for private businesses and stakeholders.
- Improving food safety awareness of the public.
- Supporting businesses in implementing food safety and quality management systems as per national and international standards.
- Developing and implementing recognition and certification systems for small businesses which improve their food safety system.
- Conducting food safety and quality audits to assess and recommend improvement opportunities.
- Assisting small businesses to use food control laboratories.
- Conducting research about food safety and quality situations in the country.

To launch this collaborative partnership, BD4FS held a Food Safety Workshop in Addis Ababa on October 24th, 2023. In attendance were His Excellency Endalew Mekonen, State Minister Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration; Amber Lily Kenny, Office Director – Economic Growth and Resilience USAID Ethiopia; Melat Getahun, USAID Ethiopia Program Management Specialist, Fisseha Merawi, USAID Ethiopia Senior Project Management Specialist, Professor Gurja Belay, from Addis Ababa University; and representatives from one of the private banks that are interested in supporting SMEs. 25 GFBs of various sizes and specialties also attended the workshop to learn about BD4FS partnerships and participate in a food safety dialogue. Amber Lily Kenny of USAID Ethiopia opened the workshop with a speech emphasizing the significance of food safety across health and well-being, economic growth and development, and global collaboration. Following Ms. Kenny's speech, His Excellency Endalew Mekonen of Trade and Regional Integration spoke about the

¹ A Growing Food Business (GFB) is considered a small-medium food enterprise that recognizes and embraces the importance of food safety as an integral part of its business model.

partnership between BD4FS and MoTRI. The Minister discussed the importance of good food safety and quality, and how MoTRI supports manufacturers and producers to improve their safety standards.



“ Our MoU and partnership agreement includes working with different institutes of the ministry to support small and medium enterprises engaged in the food value chain in different areas including the provision of training, support to improve their food safety system as per international standards, develop customized recognition and certification system for small businesses that will motivate them, and create opportunities to small businesses to enable them to use our modern laboratory facilities.”

— His Excellency Endalew Mekonen of the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration.

Endalew Mekonen, State Minister of the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration.
Photo credit: BD4FS

Following the keynote speakers, BD4FS presented an overview of the food safety training activities, focused on the [BD4FS Pre HACCP Validation Badge](#) program. To earn a Validation Badge, partner GFBs can choose to undergo training, technical assistance and auditing to earn food safety validation based on international standards. This badge will signify a high food safety standard to consumers as well as help the business become more ready for a higher-level food safety certification consistent with food safety regulations set by the Ethiopian government. Following the food safety presentation, GFB team members split into 3 groups for breakout discussions and were tasked with identifying food safety challenges and opportunities in their operations. After 30 minutes of discussion, GFBs selected a spokesperson who presented findings and recommendations to the larger group. BD4FS staff recorded the discussion around opportunities in order to best support food safety efforts at the GFB level in partnership with MoTRI.

FES also works alongside the Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise (ECAE) to support SME access to ECAE’s world-class testing and laboratory services. BD4FS helped celebrate World Quality Day 2023 at an event held by ECAE, and BD4FS Ethiopia Director Aschalew Wondie presented on a panel discussing how different stakeholders and government bodies can work to improve food safety standards and quality for GFBs.

Following these events, BD4FS Ethiopia will continue to identify partnership opportunities with the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration and the Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise to support workplan goals. This will include continuing in food safety training and technical assistance, increasing access to finance for food safety improvements, and launching the Pre-HACCP Validation Badge program. By meeting the need for accessible and affordable food safety training, BD4FS is building capacity for GFBs to operate in compliance with Ethiopian government food safety standards. Likewise, by forming a partnership with the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration, BD4FS is working to ensure that GFBs are engaged with private sector policy initiatives.



BD4FS Ethiopia Director Aschalew Wondie presenting at ECAE's World Quality Day 2023. Photo Credit: ECAE

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