



Ministry of Agriculture Conducts Mid-Year Review of Regional Activities

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) conducted a meeting on 16 July 2026 to assess the implementation of its regional work plans for the first half of 2026, as well as the progress of the Comprehensive Small and Productive Farm Plot (SPFP), according to the Ministry's Public Relations Division.

During the assessment meeting, comprehensive reports were presented by all six regions of the country covering a wide range of activities, including soil and water conservation, construction of water reservoirs, river diversion works, the status of crops and the rainy season, multiplication and distribution of improved seed, production of organic fertilizer, development of vegetables and fruits, crop and livestock health, beekeeping, distribution of chicks and the supply of eggs, as well as the implementation progress of the Comprehensive Small and Productive Farm Plot (SPFP), and other related activities.

According to assessments conducted up to the end of June 2026, of the 2,003 villages identified as having the potential to implement the Comprehensive Small and Productive Farm Plot (SPFP), 1,672 villages (more than 83%) had successfully implemented it in at least

one household, while many villages had extended the package to more than one household.

Following extensive discussions on the reports presented, participants made a number of recommendations. These included strengthening monitoring of the distribution and impact of improved seed, assessing the performance and impact of distributed chicks, and enhancing the dissemination and practical application of organic fertilizers, along with several other important recommendations and observations.

In his closing remarks, the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Arefaine Berhe, reaffirmed that the Ministry is committed to achieving its strategic vision of "Safe and Nutritious Food for Everyone; Everywhere." He emphasized that the full implementation of the Comprehensive Small and Productive Farm Plot (SPFP) remains one of the Ministry's leading strategies for achieving this objective.

The Minister noted that although the progress achieved so far is encouraging, agricultural experts should continue working with greater commitment until the program is fully implemented by every household in every village. He further encouraged front extension workers to facilitate practical learning and encourage wider adoption.





H.E Mr. Arefaine Berhe

Minister Arefaine also stressed that soil and water conservation forms the foundation of all agricultural development. He therefore called for the preparation of well-defined action plans and the establishment of close monitoring mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of soil and water conservation activities.

The mid-year review meeting was attended by senior officials and experts from the Ministry of Agriculture, together with heads of regional agriculture and land departments and technical experts from all six regions of the country.

Inception Workshop Conducted to Develop Eritrea's National Food Control Policy



Mr. Tekleab Mesghena

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), officially launched the development of Eritrea's National Food Control Policy through an inception workshop held in Asmara on July 10, 2026. The workshop marked a significant milestone in the country's ongoing efforts to establish an integrated, science-based and risk-informed food control system that safeguards

public health, strengthens food security, and supports sustainable agricultural development.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Tekleab Mesghena, Director General of the Regulatory Services Department at the Ministry of Agriculture, emphasized that the workshop represents another important step in Eritrea's journey toward establishing a formal national food control system. He noted that the initiative builds upon the achievements of the National Codex Coordinating Committee and the National Food Control Assessment conducted last year, which strengthened coordination among relevant food control authorities and laid the foundation for the current policy development process.

Mr. Tekleab stressed that developing the National Food Control Policy is a complex but essential undertaking that requires strong collaboration among all



Ms. Ariella Glinni

stakeholders. He explained that the policy will provide a coherent framework to guide national food control operations and, once approved and implemented, will serve as the logical basis for drafting Eritrea's National Food Law. He further acknowledged the technical and financial support provided by FAO, including the engagement of international consultant Dr. Zaffar Mehmood and national consultant Dr. Senay Woldeab, whose expertise will help shape the policy



Dr. Senay Woldeab

through broad consultations with national institutions.

Addressing the workshop, Ms. Ariella Glinni, FAO Representative in Eritrea, commended the Government of Eritrea, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, for its leadership and unwavering commitment to strengthening national food systems that protect public health, improve food security and nutrition, and promote sustainable agrifood systems. She emphasized that the development of the National Food Control Policy is far more than a technical exercise; it is a national commitment to safer food, healthier families, stronger institutions, and greater confidence in the systems connecting farms, fisheries, markets, households, and communities.

Ms. Glinni further highlighted that food safety is fundamentally about trust, extending from food served in homes to products sold in markets and national value chains. She noted that as Eritrea continues to advance its agriculture, livestock, fisheries and food-processing sectors, a well-coordinated food control system will be indispensable for protecting consumers, facilitating trade and enhancing market access. She also pointed out that emerging challenges—including climate variability, foodborne diseases, antimicrobial resistance, contamination risks and changing food systems—underscore the need for coordinated, evidence-based and preventive approaches to food control.

The FAO Representative outlined several strategic priorities that will guide the policy development process, including strengthening governance and coordination, reinforcing legal and regulatory frameworks, promoting risk-based food control approaches, enhancing institutional and laboratory capacities, and improving stakeholder engagement and public awareness. She reaffirmed FAO's commitment to continue supporting the Government of Eritrea through technical assistance, policy guidance



Dr. Zaffar Mehmood

and capacity development until the policy is finalized and translated into practical action.

The inception workshop brought together representatives from government institutions, United Nations agencies, academic institutions, development partners and the private sector. Presentations by national and international experts focused on Eritrea's current food control system, the national legal framework, international best practices and key considerations for designing the National Food Control Policy. Participants engaged in extensive discussions aimed at ensuring that the policy reflects national priorities and provides a practical roadmap for strengthening Eritrea's food control system in the years ahead.



“Developing Eritrea’s National Food Control Policy is a Milestone Towards a Safer Food System”

Mr. Tekleab Mesghena

Following the inception workshop on the development of Eritrea's National Food Control Policy, held on 10 July 2026, the Public Relations Division of the Ministry of Agriculture interviewed Mr. Tekleab Mesghena, Director General of the Regulatory Services Department (RSD), about the significance of the initiative and the way forward.

Question: Mr. Tekleab, what is the significance of the inception workshop?

Answer: The workshop marked an important milestone in our collective efforts to establish a formal and coordinated national food control system. It brought together all key stakeholders to begin a collaborative process of developing a policy that will strengthen food safety, protect public health, and improve coordination among institutions responsible for food control.

Q: Why is Eritrea developing a National Food Control Policy at this time?

A: The policy is being developed as a follow-up to the National Food Control Assessment conducted last year. That assessment provided us with a clear understanding of the strengths and gaps in our current food control system. Developing a national policy is, therefore, a logical step towards creating a more effective and harmonized food control system.

Q: How has Eritrea prepared the stage for the process?



Mr. Tekleab Mesghena

A: We have been building a strong foundation through our national Codex activities, coordinated by the National Codex Coordinating Committee (NCCC), chaired by the Regulatory Services Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. These efforts have significantly

strengthened cooperation among food control authorities and enhanced harmonization in food control activities.

The experience we have gained through our national Codex activities has greatly assisted us

in developing a comprehensive National Food Control Policy.

It is important to mention that the current members of the National Codex Coordinating Committee include the Ministry of Agriculture (Chair), the Ministry of Marine Resources, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Eritrean Standards Institution, the Ministry of Land, Water and Environment, the Ministry of Finance and National Development, and the National Higher Education and Research Institute, represented by Hamelmalo College of Agriculture, Mai Nefhi College of Science, and Orotta College of Medicine. There are also plans to expand the NCCC in the future through the inclusion of other national institutions, such as the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Tourism.

Q: Who is supporting this important initiative?

A: Basically, it is a national initiative. However, we are grateful to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for providing both technical and financial support. With FAO's assistance, two highly experienced consultants were recruited to lead the policy development process: Dr. Zaffar Mehmood as the international consultant and Dr. Senay Woldeab as the national consultant. They have already begun consultations with relevant institutions, and we are confident that their expertise will contribute significantly to producing a high-quality National Food Control Policy.

Q: Developing a National Food Control Policy is a complex process. What challenges do you anticipate?

A: Indeed, developing a National Food Control Policy is a complex process because it involves many institutions and sectors. However, I believe the challenge is manageable. With strong commitment, effective coordination, and active participation from all stakeholders, I am confident that we will successfully achieve our objectives.

Q: What is the next step after the National Food Control Policy is finalized?

A: Once the policy is approved by the Government and we gain experience from its implementation, the next logical step will be the development of Eritrea's National Food Law. Such legislation will provide the legal framework necessary for a comprehensive and modern national food control system in Eritrea. We hope to continue working closely with our partners, particularly FAO and WHO, as we move toward this important objective.

Q: What role do stakeholders play during the policy development process?

A: Stakeholder participation is essential. The policy must reflect the perspectives and experiences of all institutions involved in food control.

Currently, consultations are underway, allowing stakeholders to review existing practices, identify challenges, and contribute practical recommendations. Their active engagement will ensure that the final policy is realistic, effective, and nationally owned.

Q: What are the next major milestones?

A: Following this inception workshop, consultations will continue, at different levels, with all relevant stakeholders.

We expect to meet again during a validation workshop, planned for early August 2026, where all relevant stakeholders and participants will review and validate the draft National Food Control Policy before it is finalized for submission to the Government.

It is also important to note that, before the validation workshop is organized, a ministerial consultation meeting will be held to provide the necessary policy guidance essential for the development of the National Food Control Policy.

Q: Finally, what message would you like to share with stakeholders and development partners?

A: I would like to express my sincere appreciation to FAO for its continued technical and financial support, not only in conducting the National Food Control Assessment last year but also in supporting the development of the National Food Control Policy.

I also wish to thank all participating institutions and the staff of the Regulatory Services Department for their dedication and hard work.

Strengthening Eritrea's food control system is a shared responsibility, and I encourage everyone to continue contributing actively throughout this important process. Together, we can build a food control system that effectively safeguards public health and ensures safe food for all.

**We thank you
Mr. Tekleab Mesghena!**

Zenawi Zakarias:

An Agricultural Expert Pioneering an Innovative Organic Solution for Pest and Disease Control



Mr. Zenawi Zakarias

Q: Could you tell us about your background?

A: First of all, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity. My name is Zenawi Zakarias. I work as a Plant Protection expert at the Ministry of Agriculture in the Southern Region, May-Mine Sub-Zoba.

I was born and raised in Adi Chigono, May-Mine Sub-Zoba. After reaching school age, I attended Adi Chigono Elementary School from Grade 1 to Grade 5. I then continued my middle and secondary education at May-Mine School, walking about two hours each way from my village. In the 2011/2012 academic year, like every Eritrean student, I went to Sawa (25th Round) to complete my final year of secondary school and fulfill my national service. Having earned the required score for college admission, I joined Hamelmalo College of Agriculture.

Q: Could you tell us about the field in which you graduated?

A: At Hamelmalo College of Agriculture, I specialized in Plant Protection. Because this field is closely related to Biology, I chose to pursue it. After completing my studies, I was assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture in the Southern Region, May-Mine Sub-Zoba, where I have been serving as a Plant Protection expert for the past ten years.

Q: What is your connection with agriculture?

A: As the son of a farmer, I grew up working on farms and herding livestock. Like my parents, I have a deep love for agriculture and animal husbandry. I firmly believe that agriculture is the backbone of our nation, and this conviction has made me passionate about it from an early age.

Q: You were awarded for developing an organic bio-pesticide in May 2026 by the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS). Could you tell us more about your innovation?

A: Seeing farmers in our communities struggling with crop pests and resorting to chemical pesticides because they have few alternatives is deeply concerning. This situation inspired me to begin researching natural pesticides. When you witness such problems, you cannot simply stand by and do nothing. Above all, I was greatly concerned about the harmful effects of chemical pesticides.

Moreover, the Ministry of Agriculture's strategy encourages the promotion of organic agriculture, including organic pest-control methods. Guided by these considerations, I embarked on this research.

Q: What materials did you use to develop the organic pesticides, and what make them unique?

A: When I first began developing these organic pesticides, my goal was to create an effective alternative to chemical pesticides. Using two local tree species known as Alqe (*Cissus quadrangularis*) and Andel (*Capparis tomentosa*), I developed two organic pesticides. Both products are made entirely from natural plant materials found in our local environment.

Alqe and Andel are plants, and I used their leaves and tender stems to prepare the pesticides. Before introducing them to farmers, I first tested them on crops affected by aphids, which both damage plants directly and spread fungal diseases, making them particularly destructive. The results were very encouraging.

I then tested them on cabbage, oranges, tomatoes, lemons, and other crops and fruit trees. In every case, they performed very well. The pesticides successfully controlled a wide range of pests, including aphids, leaf miners, and even pests affecting teff. Because these initial trials produced solid results, I was confident enough to introduce them to farmers.

Q: What was the farmers' feedback after using this organic pesticide?

A: Before distribution, it was essential to raise awareness and provide farmers with proper training. Accordingly, I traveled throughout various parts of May-Mine Sub-Zoba, conducting awareness campaigns and training sessions. Farmers welcomed the innovation enthusiastically and adopted it successfully.

Initially, they produced and used 1,142 liters of the Alqe and Andel pesticides. Some even stored additional quantities for later use. After seeing the results in their fields, they gave us very positive feedback. Later, following the Farmers' Day event and television coverage on Eri-TV, even more farmers became convinced of its effectiveness and began requesting it in large numbers. At present, around 500 farmers are actively producing and using this organic pesticide.

Q: Why have farmers embraced these organic pesticides?

A: Farmers have adopted them because they are inexpensive, easy to prepare, and made from materials that are readily available nearby. They require very little financial investment and can be produced using simple methods. Preparation mainly involves collecting leaves from these trees, crushing them, and processing them into the pesticides. Because it is so practical and affordable, farmers have readily accepted it.

Q: Did you check whether the products have any side effects?

A: To date, we have found no evidence that these Alqe and Andel pesticides pose any risk to human health. They do not pollute the environment or harm the ecosystem.

In addition, our observations show that the preparation provides three important benefits to crops: they protect plants from pests, serve as natural nutrients, and also act as organic fertilizers, helping plants grow healthier. As a result, plants develop stronger, broader, and healthier leaves,

which ultimately contributes to higher agricultural productivity.

Q: Now, let's come back to your award.

A: This innovation was first presented during a Youth Week event in May-Mine Sub-Zoba, where it was recognized as an outstanding innovation. It later advanced to the regional and national levels, receiving excellent feedback, many valuable suggestions, and finally a first-level award.

Q: What is the secret behind your success?

A: I believe this innovation is both timely and environmentally friendly, offering farmers an excellent alternative to chemical pesticides. It also has the potential to reduce many of the harmful effects associated with synthetic pesticides.

Q: What are your future plans for expanding this innovation?

A: I will continue doing everything within my capacity to expand this work. My goal is to package the pesticides in appropriate quantities, like other agricultural products, and make them available to every farmer throughout the country—and eventually even for export.

To achieve this, I sincerely hope that the Ministry of Agriculture will continue supporting me as it has done so far, and that the Government and other relevant institutions will also provide the necessary assistance.

We wish you success in your future endeavors!



Preserving Tradition Through Innovation

Engineer Amanuel Asgedom's Improved Top-bar Beehive for Eritrean Beekeepers



Engineer Amanuel Asgedom

Innovation often begins with observing everyday challenges and finding practical solutions. For Engineer Amanuel Asgedom, Head of the Ministry of Agriculture Office in Keren Sub-Zone, Anseba Region, that journey began while working closely with farmers during agricultural extension visits. At the Eritrean National Festival-2026, Engineer Amanuel presented an improved beehive that combines Eritrea's traditional beekeeping heritage with modern scientific principles. His innovation demonstrates that meaningful progress can be achieved without abandoning local knowledge and practices.

Building on Tradition

For generations, Eritrean farmers have relied on traditional cylindrical beehives made from locally available materials. While these hives have served as the backbone of honey production across the country, they also present several management

challenges. Harvesting honey can be difficult, hive inspection is limited, and transporting or maintaining the hives often requires considerable effort.

Rather than replacing these traditional hives with expensive imported alternatives, Engineer Amanuel chose a different approach. "We wanted to preserve the traditional hive while integrating modern scientific improvements," he explains.

His design retains the familiar structure and uses materials that farmers already know well—bamboo, tree-branches, straw, grasses, and clay. The major innovation is the addition of a lightweight, inexpensive welded metal frame built to internationally recognized standards. The improved top-bar hive also incorporates removable wooden frames that allow bees to construct honeycombs naturally while making hive management significantly easier.

A Farmer-Friendly Innovation

One of the greatest strengths of the improved top-bar beehive is its accessibility. Most of the construction materials are readily available in local communities, allowing farmers to build and repair the hive themselves with minimal expense. Only a few standardized metal components require fabrication, making the overall cost affordable for small-scale beekeepers. Beyond affordability, the design offers

practical advantages. It is easier to inspect, maintain, transport, and harvest from, while still preserving the natural environment that bees require for healthy colony development.

From Field Observations to National Recognition

The idea for the improved hive emerged during agricultural extension work in 2024, when Ministry of Agriculture staff visited farming communities throughout Keren Sub-Zone. During these visits, they identified the difficulties farmers faced in managing traditional hives. Motivated by these observations, Engineer Amanuel developed the improved design and presented it at the Anseba Regional Innovation and Technology Competition. The innovation attracted considerable attention and was later showcased at a regional exhibition organized in collaboration with development partners.

Strong Institutional Support

Engineer Amanuel credits much of the project's success to the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, agricultural extension experts, development partners, and local institutions. Technical specialists have provided professional guidance to refine the design, while exhibitions and public demonstrations have helped introduce the innovation to farmers and the wider public.

According to Engineer Amanuel, visitors frequently spend considerable time discussing the new hive and asking questions about its construction and use. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Farmers appreciate that the hive is affordable, easy to maintain, and built using familiar materials.

Looking Ahead

Although the innovation has already gained recognition, Engineer Amanuel believes continued collaboration will be essential for its long-term success. He emphasizes the importance of strong coordination among government institutions, development partners, researchers, and agricultural extension workers. Careful



planning, regular evaluation, and recognition of successful innovators will encourage further improvements in Eritrea's agricultural sector. He also encourages professionals and extension staff to spend more time with farmers in rural communities, where valuable innovations often originate.

"Scientific knowledge and innovation should reach every part of the country," he says.

A Vision Rooted in Local Knowledge

Engineer Amanuel's improved top-bar beehive is more than a new agricultural technology—it represents a thoughtful blend of tradition and innovation. By respecting indigenous knowledge while applying modern engineering principles, he has created a solution that is practical, affordable, and well suited to Eritrea's rural communities.

As the Ministry of Agriculture continues to promote improved beekeeping practices, innovations like this demonstrate how locally developed solutions can strengthen food and nutrition security, increase honey production, improve farmers' livelihoods, and contribute to sustainable agricultural development across Eritrea.



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