We consume iodine in our foods. When plants and animals are raised in areas with iodine-deficient soil, the diet for those people will be less healthy, resulting in populations suffering from iodine deficiency disorders (IDD).[1] Iodine deficiency is a leading cause of mental impairment and therefore iodine offers protection to the growing brain.[2]

In many middle to high income countries, the problem of iodine deficiency has largely been solved by adding iodine to salt, which then makes it into animal feed, breads, processed foods and salt shakers in homes around the world. Salt iodization is considered the most successful type of food fortification.[2] That said, in 2017, 1 billion people globally did not have access to iodized salt.[3]

Supporting governments’ efforts to achieve universal salt iodization (USI) is Nutrition International’s main strategy to help eliminate IDD. This means that all edible salt, for households, processed foods and animal salt, is adequately iodized based on how much the general population consumes.

Nutrition International (NI) works in collaboration with the government of Ethiopia and partners to improve the legislative, policy and regulatory environments for salt iodization. NI works with the salt industry to build its capacity to comply with regulations. NI seeks to foster greater government ownership and commitment for USI programs to ensure long-term sustainability.

The areas of NI support for Salt Iodization include:

1. Building the capacity of the government quality control authorities in effective monitoring, quality control and enforcement:
   - Helping the government in developing iodization standards harmonized with global best practices and drafting legislation and regulation for enforcement.
   - Strengthening and/or establishing quality control laboratories.
   - Strengthening border surveillance points in salt importing countries.
   - Facilitating the establishment of technical working groups.

2. Strengthening the capacity of small and medium-scale salt producers in the:
   - Improvement of the iodization process, technology and internal quality control.
   - Establishment of a market driven KIO3 procurement and supply system coupled with a viable cost recovery system through revolving fund mechanisms.
   - Improvement in the industrial processes and technology including the up-gradation of salt plants.
   - Development of cooperatives and viable economic interest groups.

3. Contributing to the global evidence base and to the development of global standards and guidelines

4. Advocacy and Behaviour Change Interventions

This national scale project is being implemented in partnership with the Food, Beverage and Pharmaceutical Industries Development Institute of the Ministry of Industry, The Ethiopia Public Health Institute of the Federal Ministry of Health, Ethiopia Standard Association of the Food, Medicines and Health Care Administration and Control Authority, Federal Ministry of Trade, private salt industry and development partners. NI began work with salt fortification in Ethiopia in the late 2000s and work is ongoing.

Program type
National

References

Implementing organisations

- Government
  - Health
  - Industry
  - Details:
    more
    Ministry of Industry; The Ethiopia Public Health Institute, Federal Ministry of Health; Ethiopia Standard Association of the Food, Medicines and Health Care Administration and Control Authority; Ministry of Trade

- UN agencies
  - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

- International NGOs
  - Nutrition International

Funding sources

- Bilateral and donor agencies and lenders
  - Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Action data

Start date
Country(ies): Ethiopia
Status: On-going
Topic: Salt iodization
Target group: All population groups

Links to policies in GINA

National Nutrition Programme
National Nutrition Strategy
National Strategy for Child Survival in Ethiopia