



Ethiopia

Bringing Evidence to Decision Makers!

National Information Platform for Nutrition Communication Strategy

Ethiopian Public Health Institute
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ACRONYMS

AC	Advisory Committee
BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
C4N	Capacity for Nutrition
DFID	Department for International Development
EIAR	Ethiopia Institute for Agriculture Research
ENTAP	Ethiopia NIPN Technical Advisory Project (IFPRI)
EPHI	Ethiopian Public Health Institute
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FNSRD	Food Science and Nutrition Research Directorate
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
GSF	Global Support Facility
MCIT	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
MER SC	Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Steering Committee
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoWC	Ministry of Women and Children
NDMC	National Data Management Center
NFNP	National Food and Nutrition Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIPN	National Information Platform for Nutrition
NNCB	National Nutrition Coordination Body
NNP	National Nutrition Program
NNTC	National Nutrition Technical Committee
PPT	Power Point Template
PR	Public Relations
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
AAU	Addis Ababa University

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BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

Addressing malnutrition through a multisectoral approach has been on the agenda for many years in Ethiopia. A multisectoral National Nutrition Program (NNP) has been implemented since 2018. The country was also an early adopter of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, which promotes a coordinated approach to address malnutrition. This high-level engagement was further reinforced through the Sequota Declaration, which aims to eliminate chronic malnutrition by 2030. This declaration has been translated into a multisectoral implementation model, which operates under the NNP. The country has seen important reduction in chronic malnutrition rates over the last 10 years. Stunting rates of children under five dropped from 51 to 38 percent between 2005 and 2016. Despite these many achievements, the number of stunted children remains high.

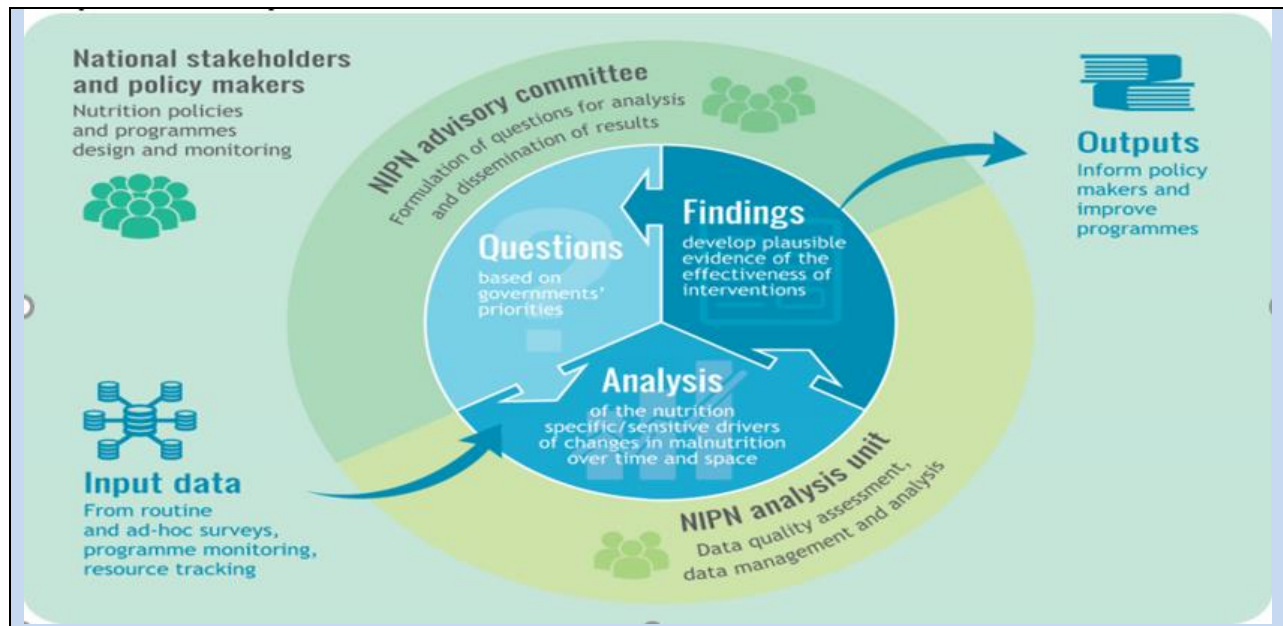
In November 2018, the Government of Ethiopia validated its first National Food and Nutrition Policy (NFNP). This policy aims to promote a coordinated and comprehensive approach to food and nutrition security. The policy also highlights the importance of evidence-based decision making. Earlier that year, in May 2018, Ethiopia launched the National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN), which specifically aims to support evidence-based decision making for nutrition. The NIPN is part of a global initiative launched by the European Union to support SUN countries that have a high malnutrition burden.

The NIPN supports the implementation of the NFNP and the NNP. It provides the necessary evidence to guide decision making for improved nutrition. From the analysis of available and shared data, it generates evidence that is used by nutrition stakeholders for developing policy, designing programs and allocating investments.

1.2. The NIPN Operational Cycle and Structure

The NIPN operational cycle consists of three operational elements that constantly revolve into each other: the policy question formulation, the identification and analysis of data, and finally the communication and outreach of research findings (see Figure 1).

FIGURE1. THE NIPN OPERATIONAL CYCLE



Source: <http://www.nipn-nutrition-platforms.org/NIPN-Guidance-Notes>

The NIPN continuously engages with decision makers. An important step in this process is the formulation and response to policy questions. The NIPN policy question formulation process is one of the starting points of the evidence-informed policy dialogue between decision-makers and the NIPN and is guided as much as possible by the overall needs of the NFNP, the NNP and the Sequota Declaration implementation. To answer these policy questions, NIPN does not collect new data but maximizes the use of existing information and data, which are assembled in a multi-sectoral Data Repository for Nutrition, housed at EPHI. Nutrition stakeholders deposit monitoring or research data sets, and findings of various research and monitoring activities in the repository. This repository will in turn be used for further nutrition analysis by NIPN.

EPHI ensures that the platform takes full advantage of internal and external expertise and resources. Within EPHI, partnerships have been developed with the Public Relations Office, the Policy Translation Directorate and the National Data Management Center (NDMC) for Health. The Ethiopian Agriculture Research Institute (EIAR) is one of the key partners of EPHI in the implementation of the NIPN. Various other NIPN partnerships are developed with other research institutes and universities to support NIPN analysis and data interpretation. A special role is assigned to the National Nutrition Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Steering Committee (MER SC), which is chaired by EPHI and co-chaired by EIAR, and which can also support data interpretation, as needed.

The accountability system of NIPN is embedded in the national nutrition structure. The NIPN reports to and receives advice from two different committees, which act in a complementary manner and allow to link NIPN with a wide set of multisectoral stakeholders. The existing MER SC incorporated in its existing mandate some advisory roles to NIPN, focusing specifically on

the operational aspects of the NIPN cycle. A dedicated NIPN Advisory Committee (AC) on the other hand ensures the policy implications and creates the linkages between NIPN and the highest level of nutrition decision making. Together, the involvement of these two committees ensures that each step of the NIPN cycle happens in a relevant, appropriate and timely manner, and in line with the needs of the stakeholders of the NFNP and NNP.

International organizations such as the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the EU's NIPN Global Support Facility (GSF) and the Capacity for Nutrition (C4N) ensure overall technical guidance.

RATIONALE FOR THE NIPN COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The NIPN is the first national platform which aims to link researchers with policy and programmatic decision makers. As a key platform supporting the implementation of the NFNP, the NIPN aims to deliver evidence in a timely matter to decision makers. However, communication between researchers and decision makers can be challenging, as is explained in annex 1. Creating these linkages through effective communication receives therefore focused attention. To enable a systematic approach of communication which encompasses all aspects and needs of a successful NIPN, a coordinated and comprehensive NIPN Communication Strategy is necessary. This Strategy addresses existing communication challenges which hamper evidence-based decision making.

Successful implementation of the NIPN is built on the assumption that all the stakeholders, including researchers, decisions makers, implementers and the general public, communicate successfully and contribute to the NIPN. The implementation of a dedicated communication strategy will also allow for NIPN to be recognized as a trustworthy, credible, accurate and influential platform. The strategy also addresses some of the visibility aspects of NIPN. As a result, potential stakeholders and partners will collaborate more easily with the platform and sustainability can be supported.

For example, the development of the NIPN Data Repository requires an intensive and coherent communication approach which promotes a data sharing culture. Effective communication facilitates establishing effective NIPN data sharing partnerships with various research institutes, universities and other organizations. Data-sharing is an important way to increase the ability of NIPN to analyze and translate existing data into meaningful reports and knowledge. If data sharing is successful, NIPN can use the data to answer questions that the initial data collectors may not have considered. For this reason, a systematic approach to communication about NIPN and data sharing is important to support these processes. Annex 1 expands on the possible challenges and the importance of communication for data sharing in Ethiopia.

This document provides both the NIPN Communication Strategy and a sample of the complementary implementation plan. The strategy focuses on objectives, audiences and messages. The plan focuses on the channels, tools and timelines.

OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES OF THE NIPN COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The NIPN communication strategy supports reaching the objectives and expected results of the overall NIPN approach – which in turn helps to reach the objectives of the NNP and the NFNP.

The log frame of the NIPN Communication Strategy is in line with the overall NIPN log frame (see Annex 2).

The objectives of the NIPN Communication Strategy are articulated at two levels: the overall objective, and the outcomes (See figure 2). The extent of the contribution of the Communication Strategy varies between these levels. Achieving the overall objective is not totally within the control of the interventions under the NIPN Communication Strategy and requires other supportive interventions. The outcomes, on the other hand, will be delivered through the implementation of the NIPN Communication Strategy. Every outcome is in turn linked with specific outputs and activities. Annex 2 contains the list of outputs by outcome.

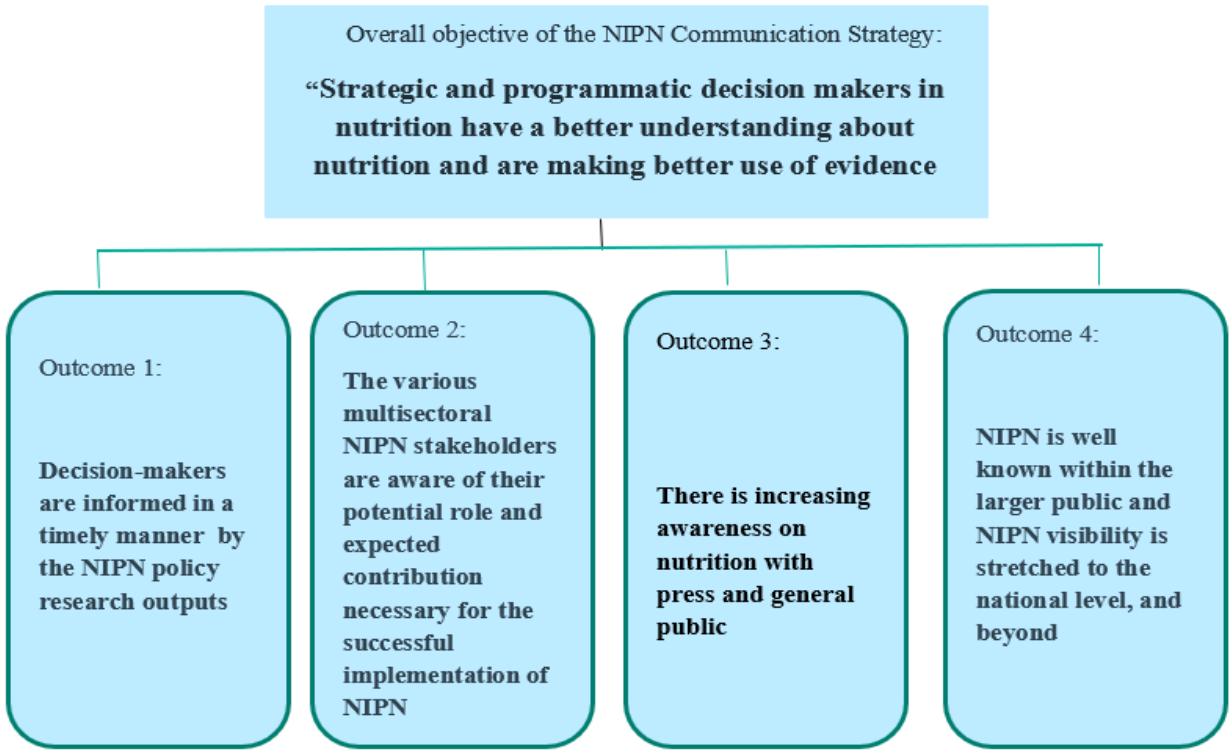


FIGURE 2: OVERALL OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES OF THE NIPN COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

THE SCOPE OF THE NIPN COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The NIPN Communication Strategy identifies how to reach its objective and outcome, what to communicate, with whom, and which are the effective messages for each audience. This is complemented with specific communication activities, which include the different communication channels and tools, and the timeline of planned communication activities.

NIPN activities which require communication are first mapped out and linked to specific audiences, messages and a best means of communication channels which befits the target audience. The messages to be delivered are adapted to the audience. Key questions related to the audience are being answered such as, “What are the key messages NIPN would like to send to the key audiences” and “How can these messages be delivered clearly and precisely?”

Since the NIPN’s aim is focused on influencing secondary audiences of decision makers, it encompasses unique channels of communication to deliver key messages and ensure effective delivery and intake of these messages.

1.3. Mapping of NIPN Activities Requiring Communication

The NIPN has various activities which have specific communication needs. These include:

- i) Guiding policy question formulation
- ii) Gaining access to existing research or monitoring data; and reports
- iii) Identifying data gaps
- iv) Promoting the importance of good quality data
- v) Developing and managing the NIPN Data Repository
- vi) Developing partnerships for data analysis and data interpretation
- vii) Developing NIPN reports and outputs
- viii) Sharing the NIPN outputs timely with a wide set of stakeholders
- ix) Seeking active involvement of multisectoral stakeholders
- x) Supporting the overall national nutrition agenda
- xi) Promoting visibility of the NIPN

BOX 1: NIPN ACTIVITIES WITH SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION NEEDS

1.4. NIPN Audiences, Messages and Channels

The audiences have been identified with consideration of the degree of influence and involvement in the NIPN. The range of the audience that NIPN is trying to reach can be categorized by the following:

Primary Audience

The primary audience refers to those people who are directly involved with the NIPN activities, and work with the NIPN team in a collaborative effort for the realization of the NIPN objectives.

The primary audience comprises of

- The direct NIPN implementers: The EPHI-NIPN team, EPHI-FSNRD, EPHI Policy Translation Directorate, EPHI National Data Management Center (NDMC), EIAR
- NIPN implementing partners: Universities, academic and other research institutes; Government institutions involved in the NNP, and collecting and/or analyzing data for nutrition
- The members of the MER SC.

All of these audiences have an implementation role in one or more of the operational elements of the NIPN cycle.

Secondary Audience

The secondary audience refers to those who are not directly involved in the NIPN activity. Instead, they are the target receivers of the key messages of NIPN. They are the final destination for the NIPN evidence outputs.

Thus, the secondary audiences comprise of:

- The decision makers related to policies, programming and financing for nutrition. They include members of the NIPN Advisory Committee, decision-makers in the NNTC and NNCB, policy advisors, development partners and donors, professional organizations, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, private sector, and global initiatives
- The press and the general public

1.5. Key Messages for NIPN Audiences

The audience determines the type of message and the selection of communication channels to deliver the message. The NIPN aims to reach the decision-makers, program implementers, planners, researchers, data managers, the general public, and many other stakeholders who are actors on nutrition. NIPN will craft messages to convey information for target audiences and present evidence clearly to influence decision making for nutrition (See table 1).

TABLE 1: KEY MESSAGES FOR SELECTED NIPN AUDIENCES

Audience	Message
Primary Audience	
Direct NIPN implementers and key partners of NIPN implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain NIPN operational cycles, roles and responsibilities and relevant guidelines • Share expectations for partnership and collaboration • Update on progress and accountability efforts
Data providers (research, monitoring, evaluation, statistics) and users of the data repository	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share benefits of enacting the data sharing policy • Share NIPN's ability to manage a data repository which allows for transparent and responsible data sharing of quality data • Provide information on the use of the data repository • Explain partnership and collaboration modalities
Research institutes, universities and data/statistic agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the benefits of developing partnership for data sharing, advanced data analysis and interpretation • Provide information and guidelines related to the use of the NIPN Data Repository • Share evidence and research experience • Announce NIPN activities • Share relevant policy questions which will not be answered by NIPN but can be answered by universities
Members of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain NIPN processes and progress • Formulate request of review/required support during any of the NIPN process • Stress the importance of collaboration between researchers and decision makers • Discuss policy needs and engage in policy question formulation • Share evidence collected in a timely manner • Update on NIPN reporting and relevant accountability efforts
Secondary audience	
Decision Makers involved in the NFNP , NIPN AC members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss policy needs and engage in policy question formulation ; • Request validation of policy questions and research outputs (NIPN AC only) • Bring evidence timely to decision makers to influence decision making for policies, programming and financing for nutrition; • Provide updates on nutrition tracking • Promote general awareness on nutrition issues
Media/General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain pathways for improved nutrition • Share short messages which come out of the NIPN analysis • Share updates on nutrition indicator tracking and dashboard; • Promote awareness of nutrition issues and programs • Stress importance of citizen engagement for nutrition • Share highlights on NIPN reporting • Announce NIPN activities

1.6. Communication Channels

The communication channels are identified to fit with the intended NIPN audience. Table 2 provides a (non-exclusive) list of communication channels for relevant audiences. These communication channels will be used to ensure visibility of NIPN, to communicate about the Data Repository and to communicate the results of the NIPN analysis widely through various portals.

Short NIPN policy briefs complement the research reports. They enable for key research findings to be widely shared with broader audiences and with decision makers, without overwhelming the audience with too much information. Policy briefs will be targeting decision makers, program designers, and the wider nutrition/research community. The policy brief will package the outputs of the NIPN analysis in a reader-friendly, clear and comprehensible form, and meet the needs of their intended audience, especially policy and programmatic decision makers. The policy brief will be delivered timely to ensure influencing of relevant programmatic or policy decisions. Policy briefs are generally concise and short. NIPN will identify a most appropriate model of policy brief, based on national and international experiences.

NIPN will also develop infographics which clearly reveal the research findings using relevant messages assisted with descriptive and graphs. NIPN will also maintain a dashboard, which can be used as conversation starters around well-defined nutrition issues.

The NIPN Dashboard allows representing national and sub-national nutrition information from multiple sources - linking this with key messages - in a visual format that can be easily understood by all stakeholders, including those not used to working with numbers. The objectives of the dashboard are to quickly produce an initial multisectoral analysis of nutrition-related information at national and regional level. It will also be used to initiate dialogue between decision makers and researchers regarding multisectoral nutrition indicators, programs and investments.

NIPN knowledge and information sharing aim to improve NIPN implementation and therefore involves many of the NIPN partners. These tools will help creating an understanding of the NIPN cycle and will support further expansion of the NIPN platform to regions. It allows for the NIPN stakeholders to have adequate access to the knowledge documents needed to implement a sustainable NIPN. Various documents will be developed, based on the intervention and the approach applied.

- **The NIPN guidelines developed by GSF** will be shared with all relevant NIPN stakeholders. The NIPN guidelines explain the NIPN operational cycle and key activities to the NIPN stakeholders and partners; take them through the different activities and ensure that the expectations are well defined to ensure a consistent NIPN approach over time and throughout its implementation cycle.
- **Reports and discussions on event evaluations:** will ensure that specific activities are actually evaluated, and lessons learned shared with the full NIPN team and partners for further improving implementation.

- **Knowledge sharing emails** are email sent out to a selected distribution list and allow to share recent evidence around a specific nutrition subject to a selected number of NIPN implementers)
- The development of **short best practices booklets** which explain what worked well and why, and which were the processes applied.
- **The establishment of a shared NIPN drive**, which allows equal access to all NIPN implementers to a wide set of documents necessary to implement NIPN.
- **Audiovisual productions** such as documentation of events and seminars and experience sharing videos.
- Other forms of knowledge and experience sharing will involve **interpersonal discussions** such as knowledge sharing meetings (in which learning and information can be exchanged), peer discussions following certain key events or deliverables, and finally mentoring or coaching.

NIPN will develop various information tools on the progress of NIPN. Due attention will be given to NIPN visibility and branding (see 4.5 for more information). These material include

- **The NIPN brochure**, which includes a general overview of the NIPN objective and expected results and explains the operational cycle.
- **A quarterly newsletter** will consist of short informative documents which provide a quick update on NIPN progress and key outputs. The Newsletter uses a specific template and will most often cover 3 to 4 topics of interest to the audience. It will be shared in hard and soft copy to selected NIPN stakeholders and posted on the NIPN website or Facebook page.

Regular press releases will be developed when NIPN wants to promote a significant or specific activity or output. It also will be used to notify the media about an event that will take place, or to promote general awareness on nutrition.

A dedicated NIPN website will be created, as part of the EPHI website. The policy briefs, nutrition dashboard, lessons learnt, and evidence generated, various guidelines, and the link to the NIPN Data Repository will be published on the website on a regular basis. The NIPN website will also include links to other websites, which provide nutrition evidence.

To ensure general understanding about nutrition issues, and promote multisectoral engagement, NIPN will ensure that its website reaches also the press and the general public. A nutrition dashboard provides a quick overview on various nutrition outcomes and outputs and will inform a wide set of audiences. It will be used as a conversation starter during various events. NIPN will use all of the above channels to also reach out actively to the press with the objective to promote coverage on nutrition in the press. NIPN will also co-organize and/or support larger nutrition awareness raising events on nutrition, in order to reach the general public.

Social Media which will be used by NIPN are Facebook and Twitter.

NIPN Policy and Research Seminars will be organized to allow knowledge sharing on nutrition issues and to promote linkages between researchers and decision makers. As part of its mandate, NIPN promotes outreach of existing high-level nutrition related research findings by organizing topical Nutrition Research and Policy Seminars. National and international researchers are asked to bring their research finding for a multisectoral public of researchers, program implementers, decision makers, ministries and NGOs. Through these seminars, NIPN encourages regular interactions between researchers and decision makers, promotes increased knowledge about nutrition evidence in the country and initiates discussions about policy and programmatic implications of this evidence, and encourages the involvement of various NFNP actors in the NIPN process. By organizing a lunch following the seminar, NIPN promotes further social interaction and networking – which allows creating strong bridges between researchers and decision makers from different institutes.

Various nutrition forums will be used by NIPN to facilitate discussion about NIPN evidence and NIPN progress. Through its position in the national nutrition governance system, the EPHI will ensure that existing influential nutrition forums include a session on NIPN on their agenda and are used to inform and influence policy decisions. When and where applicable, presentations on NIPN will be prepared and delivered by high level staff of the EPHI and EIAR .

NIPN will co-organize national conferences to share learning and information dissemination in partnership with key stakeholders such as local universities, research institutes and development partners. Opportunities such as the SUN annual progress meeting along with other key programming sectoral events and/or opportunities offered by IFPRI via Compact 2025 will also be considered, though these opportunities need to be prioritized and planned for.

NIPN will engage at international forums to present findings and share learning for the core NIPN team and the advisory committee. This is critical to contribute to the global learning and body of evidence, but also, to gain lessons from the global community and increase the team’s exposure to similar experiences and initiatives.

TABLE 2: NIPN COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND TOOLS, BY AUDIENCE

Selected communication channels and tools	Primary Audience: NIPN implementers and partners				Secondary audience: decision makers, press and general public				
	Internal and NIPN implementers	EPHI and EIAR	MER SC	Researcher, data collectors, universities	Nutrition experts at ministries	Policy and financial decision makers	Program decision makers	Media	General public
Traditional form of communication channels									
NIPN Policy Briefs						X	X		
Infographics						X	X	X	
Nutrition Dashboard						X	X	X	X
NIPN brochure	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Selected communication channels and tools	Primary Audience: NIPN implementers and partners				Secondary audience: decision makers, press and general public				
	Internal and NIPN implementers	EPHI EIAR	MER SC	Researcher, data collectors, universities	Nutrition experts at ministries	Policy and financial decision makers	Program decision makers	Media	General public
NIPN guidelines			X	X					
Experience and knowledge sharing among the NIPN implementing countries and among NIPN team				X	X			X	X
Press releases								X	
Digital Communication channels									
Dedicated NIPN website	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Quarterly newsletter	X		X	X	X			X	
Social Media								X	X
Documentaries and photos								X	X
Events									
Nutrition Policy and Research Seminars	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Co-organization of national events			X	X	X	X	X	X	
Participation in international events	X					X	X		
Printed documents, brochures,			X	X	X	X	X		
Press releases on events						X	X	X	X
Visibility materials, banners								X	X
Branding material ¹				X	X			X	X

¹ Branding: While organizing and attending any public event, promotional materials such as T-shirts, caps, key holders, folders, pens, USB sticks, writing pads branded with NIPN logo could be prepared and distributed to the audience to assure better visibility.

Selected communication channels and tools	Primary Audience: NIPN implementers and partners				Secondary audience: decision makers, press and general public				
	Internal and NIPN implementers	EPHI EIAR	MER SC	Researcher, data collectors, universities	Nutrition experts at ministries	Policy and financial decision makers	Program decision makers	Media	General public
Interpersonal Communication									
Informal discussions			X		X	X	X		
Meetings with stakeholders	X		X	X	X	X	X		

1.7. Visibility and Branding

NIPN activities will remain visible through various channels and throughout the implementation cycle. Adequate branding will be applied.

Visibility

Making NIPN visible is a key activity of NIPN communication. Visibility connects NIPN to the larger audience by reflecting what NIPN does and means. In line with national and EU requirements (EU 2018), all NIPN visibility activities will include a clear communication objective; a well-defined targeted audience; will be accurate and factual; and use the local language whenever needed. Besides branding, digital communication channels, such as a dynamic NIPN website, Facebook and twitter will be used to convey NIPN visibility.

Branding

Through branding, NIPN will communicate a positive image of the platform, which will enhance its credibility and promote partnerships. Branding will be incorporated into dissemination through the design of recognizable logos and slogans. While organizing and attending any public event, promotional materials such as T-shirts, caps, key holders, folders, pens, USB sticks, writing pads branded with NIPN logo will be prepared and distributed to the audience to assure better visibility. Internal branding will include the use of office signage with the NIPN logo and tagline, *“Bringing Evidence to Decision Makers”* Formal branding while communicating with other partners and external bodies will be achieved through specific NIPN letterheads and business cards; proper branding in all promotional publication materials, developing standard templates for various printed material.

In addition, all the materials NIPN used while communication with institutions, researchers and decision-makers, will mention the NIPN donors, and include their logo, placed as per donor visibility regulations. NIPN donors are EUD, BMGF and DFID. As per the EU visibility strategy, the logo of donors and partners will be located on the front of any publication. The NIPN, EPHI and donor logos will appear in all NIPN outputs. When and where applicable, the logo of IFPRI will be used on selected research outputs which were written through collaborative research and after permission of IFPRI headquarters. As per the mutual agreements, other partner logos will be placed in consideration with the consensus among the parties.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES BY OUTPUT

Based on the above, the NIPN communication strategy will aim to carry out a well-defined set of activities. Table 3 provides the indicate activities by output. The timeline of these activities is defined in Annex 3.

TABLE 3. INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES BY OUTPUT

Outputs by outcome	Indicative Activities by Output	Monitoring tools of activities
Outcome 1: Decision-makers are informed by the NIPN research outputs		
Output 1.1. NIPN will present the findings of analysis in a format suitable for the audience of decision makers; and disseminate information by different means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop annual NIPN Communication strategy and plan • Develop and disseminate policy briefs • Organize/co-organize at least one annual event to present evidence on nutrition • Develop and share infographics per year • Organize large publicity events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIPN communication strategy and plan available on the NIPN website • Number of policy briefs disseminated • Number of NIPN infographics available on the NIPN website • Number of blogs posted on the web • Number of large events (co)organized
Output 1.2. NIPN Nutrition Policy and Research Seminars cover policy relevant topics and are being attended by decision makers and researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize Nutrition Policy and Research Seminars a year • Share on the NIPN Website a blog for selected seminar organized with major discussion points and conclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of seminars per year which secures the attendance of different government sectors and stakeholders. • Analysis of Seminar evaluation questionnaire and participation list shared with EPHI NIPN management • Number of blogs on seminars and events on NIPN website
Output 1.3. NIPN national nutrition outreach events are also used to initiate discussions with decision makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch discussions with decision makers to reflect about the existing evidence, how they will use this evidence, and what are the remaining evidence gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General overview of the reflections of decision makers are posted by the NIPN team on the NIPN Website/ and or Facebook page and shared with the MER SC

Outcome 2 The various multi-sectorial NIPN stakeholders are aware of their potential role and expected contribution necessary of the successful implementation of NIPN		
Output 2.1. NFNP stakeholders are kept informed about NIPN activities and outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a NIPN Brochure summarizing the NIPN operational cycle and partnerships • Produce presentation on NIPN progress and outputs during nutrition meetings • Develop annual progress report and share with donor, MER SC and NIPN AC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of NIPN brochures distributed • Number of presentations on NIPN during nutrition meetings of NNTC, NNCB, and other nutrition meetings • NIPN Progress report shared with EUD
Output 2.2. NIPN promotes interaction and collaboration between researchers, decision makers and members of the MER SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote linkages and networking between researchers and decision makers through the Seminars • Link ME SC members, ministries and universities to NIPN trainings and other activities that involve dissemination of information on NIPN • Ensure that the meetings of the MER SC include one agenda point which communicates on the NIPN • Document NIPN processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of seminars per year which have a good composition of participation from stakeholders • Number of MER SC members, University members and other government staff who attended NIPN trainings per year • Number of MER SC meetings which included agenda point on NIPN • Best practices booklet developed and shared • Number of Documents produced on NIPN progress
Output 2.3. NIPN facilitates access to data and share knowledge and resources with a wide set of potential data/knowledge providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop brochures on the Nutrition Data Repository • Promote the Nutrition Data Repository on different events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIPN Data repository guidelines posted on the website • Number of events organized to promote the use of the data repository • Number of brochures on the Nutrition Data Repository distributed

Outcome 3: There is increasing awareness on nutrition with press and general public		
Output 3.1. NIPN is considered by the media as an accessible platform related to all nutrition evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regular contact and communication with media • Include selected members of the press in trainings where relevant. • Send news alerts and press releases • Organize press conferences and/or interviews about nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of contact points with media • Number of press who attend NIPN trainings • Number of interviews organized around nutrition by NIPN • Number of News alerts, press release& press conference held
Output 3.2. The general public has more access to nutrition evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put outputs on the NIPN website • Develop documentary on some of the research outputs explaining nutrition, and put link on the NIPN website • Organize media debates and awareness session on nutrition • Make the e-newsletter available on the NIPN website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of website hits on the NIPN website on the posted contents • Number of big events which include NIPN branding elements • Number of media debates & awareness session • Number of e-newsletter posted on the web & distributed in a hard copy
Output 3.3. Nutrition decision makers are more aware on how they should reach out to the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize discussion sessions about how to identify existing and new ways to increase general public awareness and participation around nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices booklet on how to engage with the general public posted on the website or the Facebook page developed
Output 4. NIPN is well known within the larger public and NIPN visibility is stretched to the national level, and beyond		
Output 4.1. Digital information channels are used to circulate/ convey information about NIPN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the NIPN website • Convey NIPN messages through Facebook and Twitter • Develop quarterly NIPN E-newsletters • Apply branding during big Public Relations events, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events where the NIPN brochures were made available for the public • Number of NIPN newsletters produced • Monitoring report on the number of visits to website
Output 4.2. The Press is informed of all relevant NIPN events and outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce dedicated NIPN info packs for the press: • Sponsor different events / • Address media queries timely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of press info packs (of News, articles and blogs circulated) • Number of press/events which gives/receives NIPN press coverage • Number of Media queries addressed

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events sponsored
Output 4.3. NIPN outputs and experiences are known also at international level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIPN staff will participate in international event per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of participation in international events posted on the NIPN website
Output 4.4. NPN applies adequate branding and visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop branding guidelines and communication templates • Ensure partners' contribution are duly acknowledged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding guidelines and templates shared

MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION

A report on the communication activities will be prepared by the end of each calendar year. The Communication Strategy’s log frame will be the main instrument of monitoring its progress. The dedicated NIPN Communication Expert will draft an annual progress assessment. The assessments will be conducted by using the Strategy’s result framework, and will review progress towards the outcome, outputs and activities. As defined in table 3 above, the activities under each output include a monitoring segment, which will allow measuring inputs, processes, and outputs of the NIPN Communication Strategy and relevant activities

The annual report will report on the actual achievements, challenges and successes of the communication strategy implementation. It will facilitate review, benchmarking comparisons between different activities over time to revise and help to assess what is working and what is not. To write this annual assessment, the NIPN Communication Expert will receive support from senior EPHI NIPN staff to finalize the report. If and when required by the EPHI NIPN coordinators, the IFPRI technical and policy advisor, and/or IFPRI hired communication specialist will provide additional support. In line with the governance structure of NIPN, the progress report will be shared with the NIPN AC and the MER SC. If required by the NIPN AC or EPHI management, an evaluation of the communication efforts can be carried out.

RESOURCES

1.8. Human Resources

The implementation of the Communication Strategy involves all the NIPN core team at EPHI and with some extended to the EIAR. The NIPN team has hired a dedicated communication expert, who will guide the implementation of this strategy, and will ensure that all communication material is accessible and user friendly for its audience. For this reason, the communication expert will provide relevant guidance when the NIPN team develops technical guidelines, policy notes and other outputs. He/she will also ensure that links to these documents can be found on the NIPN website. In addition, the communication expert will draft presentations, make minutes of all meeting, seminars and workshops, develop brochures and other promotional material. The

communication expert will work very closely with the technical team. She/he will be supported by the NIPN public health specialist and nutrition specialists at EPHI who will ensure quality control.

When and where needed, the NIPN team will request support from the EPHI Information Technology Service and the Public Relations Office. NIPN is developing a website which is linked to the EPHI website and server to post its articles, news, data and other relevant contents. Thus, the EPHI IT section will give technical support to the NIPN web management. The EPHI Public Relations Office will assist in documenting and posting the NIPN contents on the EPHI web and social media (Facebook, Twitter) platforms. When and where needed, the NIPN team will contract out specific communication tasks to consultants and specialized companies.

1.9. Technical Assistance

In Ethiopia, NIPN receives support to establish and implement the platform from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), which has one of the best communications divisions in the world and has a very strong reputation in translating research information in such a way that it becomes accessible to those who are not engaged in research.

If required, and at the request of the NIPN coordinator, support for communication activities will be provided by the IFPRI ENTAP team. IFPRI has assigned a Senior Technical and Policy Advisor who will advise the NIPN in many of the communication aspects of the NIPN. When and where necessary, IFPRI will also hire a part time communication and writing expert, who will review and support editing of the NIPN outputs and who will provide mentoring support to the local team. At the request of the EPHI NIPN coordinator, IFPRI will also organize specific report writing and other communication trainings, to build communication capacities at EPHI, EIAR and with local universities and research institutes. When and where applicable, the GSF or the C4N will provide relevant training in communication.

1.10. Financial Resources

Between 2018 and 2021, NIPN's main source of funding comes from the European Union, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID). The EU provides the funds directly to the EPHI. Funds allow financing a wide set of communication activities. Every year, the EPHI NIPN communication expert will ensure that the NIPN activities are in the annual plan and well budgeted.

ANNEX 1: SETTING THE STAGE: COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

Successful implementation of NIPN will heavily depend on how the research outputs are being communicated to decision makers. NIPN uses existing data sets for further analysis. These data will be collected and managed in a dedicated NIPN data repository. Effective communication will facilitate access to these datasets and the establishment of this data repository.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVED COMMUNICATION BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND DECISION MAKERS

Over the last years, various research outputs recommended that researchers and decision makers have to engage more in order to lead to more informed decision making for nutrition in Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular.

Aryeetey et al (2017) demonstrate that there is a strong interest for partnership between researchers and decision makers in Africa. The study highlights a demand for evidence by decision makers, but also spells out some systemic challenges to this evidence use. Among these, some challenges relate to the poor communication of research findings. Researchers prefer to promote their work to academic audiences and are not always doing sufficient efforts to reach out to decision makers. This results often in research outputs which remain inaccessible to decision makers. The study identified the need for more clear and concise communication between both groups. Nutrition program implementers and decision makers “were particularly clear about their need for research evidence to inform decisions as well as their desire to be informed about progress of ongoing local research. However, there was no existing mechanism for sharing information across sectors.”

A study which reviewed the Knowledge Gaps and Opportunities for Future Research on Ethiopian Food Security and Agriculture in 2018 also highlights the importance of better communication between researchers and decision makers. More communication efforts are needed “to ensure that research moves beyond researchers, and that it influences policies, practices and services.” Research outputs are often too complicated or lengthy for decision makers. Research findings can be made more accessible to decision makers through syntheses, and adequate messaging, more focus on knowledge translation, communication, networking and brokering (Logan 2018).

Motanni et al. (2019) reviewed lessons learned from Evidence-Informed Decision-Making in Nutrition & Health (EVIDENT), which was also implemented in Ethiopia. The study recommends establishing a collaborative partnership between researchers, regional and international decision-makers. Some of the barriers that hampered the usage of research evidence in decision-making include poor quality and inaccessibility of research, a paucity of locally relevant research, little or no funding, and a lack of addressing the decision-maker’s information needs. In order to influence policy making, more interactions between researchers and decision-makers are needed, better communication, networking

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION TO PROMOTE DATA SHARING

The exact structure of the NIPN Data Repository is currently being developed in line with national and institutional data sharing guidelines, but its success builds on the communication approaches applied by other data sharing initiatives. It is closely linked to the Government of Ethiopia's efforts to promote access to data, led by Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT). MCIT's action plan to integrate open data principles across the public sector developed in 2014 stresses the importance of good communication to support the institutionalization of a culture of openness in all government departments and agencies (MCIT 2014; Boyera 2019).

The NIPN also works closely with other EPHI initiatives to implement communication activities which promote access to existing databases. In 2017, the EPHI established the National Data Management Center (NDMC) which sets up a centralized system that continuously collects, stores, manages, analyzes and synthesizes, and disseminate public health and biomedical data available at EPHI, research institutes, academics and agencies in Ethiopia as well as data that can legitimately be accessed from international data repositories. The NDMC developed a data sharing policy and relevant guidelines, acknowledging that the success of the NDMC depends heavily on strong communication with data collectors and users (EPHI 2016; EPHI 2018).

ANNEX 2. EXPECTED OUTPUTS BY OUTCOME

The log frame of the NIPN Communication Strategy is in line with the overall NIPN log frame. The NIPN framework includes the following outcomes and 3 results.

NIPN Outcome: **“Strengthened national capacity to monitor progress towards under nutrition reduction and to implement more cost-effective and evidence-based policies.”**

- Result 1: National host entities (EPHI and sectoral ministries and partners contributing to the NNP-II) have the capacity to operate and maintain the NIPN
- Result 2: Ethiopia tracks progress in meeting its national objectives on under nutrition reduction and in monitoring nutrition investments to guide and inform the NNP-II implementation and contributing sectors (at least health and agriculture)
- Result 3: Ethiopia is able to translate NIPN findings into nutrition related policies. NNCB and sectoral senior officials/decision makers in nutrition have a better understanding and are making better use of evidence generated through this project for strategic and programmatic decision makers.

The communication strategy supports reaching all of these results, but the activities are mostly embedded in the 3rd expected results of NIPN. Hence, the overall strategy goal of the NIPN communication strategy is very much linked with the overall NIPN objective.

TABLE 4. NIPN COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

Outcome 1: Decision-makers are informed by the NIPN research outputs		
Output 1.1. NIPN will present the findings of analysis in a format suitable for the audience (decision makers); and disseminate information by different means	Output 1.2. NIPN Nutrition Policy and Research Seminars cover policy relevant topics and are being attended by decision makers and researchers	Output 1.3. NIPN national nutrition outreach events are also used to initiate discussions with decision makers

Outcome 2 The various multisectoral NIPN stakeholders are aware of their potential role and expected contribution necessary of the successful implementation of NIPN		
Output 2.1. NFNP stakeholders are kept informed about NIPN activities and outputs	Output 2.2. NIPN promotes interaction and collaboration between researchers, decision makers and members of the MER SC	Output 2.3. NIPN facilitates access to data and share knowledge and resources with a wide set of potential data/knowledge providers

Outcome 3: There is increasing awareness on nutrition with press and general public		
Output 3.1. NIPN is considered by the media as an accessible platform related to all nutrition evidence	Output 3.2. The general public has more access to nutrition evidence	Output 3.3. Nutrition decision makers are more aware on how they should reach out to the general public

Output 4. NIPN is well known within the larger public and NIPN visibility is stretched to the national level, and beyond			
Output 4.1. Digital information channels are used to disseminate information about NIPN	Output 4.2. The Press is informed of all relevant NIPN events and outreach activities	Output 4.3. NIPN outputs and experiences are known at international level	Output 4.4. NPN applies adequate branding and visibility

ANNEX 3. TIMELINE OF ACTIVITY PLAN

The below table provides the indicative activity plan by quarter for 2020. This plan will be updated annually. Indicative activities will also be integrated in the overall NIPN annual plan, which is developed at the start of every year.

TABLE 5: SAMPLE TIMELINE OF ACTIVITY PLAN

Indicative Activities by Output	2020			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1.1. NIPN will present the findings of analysis in a format suitable for the audience of decision makers; and disseminate information by different means				
Develop the NIPN Communication strategy and post on NIPN website	x			
Develop policy briefs with clear messages		x		x
Disseminate policy briefs: hard copies, soft copies emails and on NIPN website		x		x
Make presentations of the policy briefs in at least 3 nutrition events		x	x	x
Organize an annual NIPN event for national stakeholders			x	
Identify useful studies and reports on nutrition and post on the NIPN website	x	x	x	x
Develop and share at least 2 infographics per year and disseminate widely		x		x
Output 1.2. NIPN Nutrition Policy and Research Seminars cover policy relevant topics and are being attended by decision makers and researchers				
Organize at least 6 NIPN seminars a year	x	x	x	x
Post on the NIPN Website a blog for Selected seminars organized with major discussion points and conclusions, and with links to the actual papers	x	x	x	x
For every seminar, prepare one pager News and report which analyzes multisectoral participation of seminar	x	x	x	x
Output 1.3. NIPN national nutrition outreach events are also used to initiate discussions with decision makers				
Ensure that the annual national nutrition outreach events include at least one session with decision makers		x		
Post findings of the event on the NIPN website and share with decision makers				
Output 2.1. NFNP stakeholders are kept informed about NIPN activities and outputs				
Produce and update a NIPN Brochure summarizing the NIPN operational cycle and partnerships.	x			
Develop quarterly PowerPoint presentations which report on NIPN progress and present for MER SC and NIPN AC	x	x	x	x

Indicative Activities by Output	2020			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Develop annual progress report and share with donors, MER SC and NIPN AC.				x
Document NIPN processes and share with national and international stakeholders		x		x
Output 2.2. NIPN promotes interaction and collaboration between researchers, decision makers and members of the MER SC				
Promote networking among NIPN stakeholders through Seminars	x	x	x	x
Invite ME SC members, ministries and universities to relevant NIPN trainings and other activities that involve dissemination of information on NIPN	x	x	x	x
Include in the agenda of every meetings of the MER SC one agenda point which allows to communicate and update of the NIPN activities		x		x
Ex tract NIPN calendar events on the EPHI and other institutions website	x	x	x	x
Output 2.3. NIPN facilitates access to data and share knowledge and resources with a wide set of potential data/knowledge providers				
Develop easy to read brochures and guideline on the Nutrition Data Repository		x		
Send guidelines and brochures to relevant universities and research institutes	x		x	
Post relevant guidelines on the website	x			x
Implement relevant promotional communication activities	x	x	x	x
Output 3.1. NIPN is considered by the media as an accessible platform related to all nutrition evidence				
Establish regular contact and communication with media	x	x	x	x
Include selected members of the press in trainings where relevant.			x	
Post for every seminar and NIPN workshop a news alerts	x	x	x	x
Write and share press releases for national events and other important NIPN moments		x		x
Organize press conferences and/or interviews about nutrition		x		x
Develop, post and email quarterly e-newsletters which allows for easy access of findings and highlights key research	x	x	x	x
Output 3.2. The general public has more access to nutrition evidence				
Post easy to read nutrition infographics on nutrition on the NIPN website		x		x
Develop documentary on some of the research outputs		x		
Organize media awareness session on nutrition and related issues, media debates.	x		x	
Design and distribute information postcards with key messages on nutrition	x			x

Indicative Activities by Output	2020			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Organize radio campaign on nutrition		x		
Output 3.3. Nutrition decision makers are more aware on how they should reach out to the general public				
Include discussions about how to identify existing and new ways to increase general public awareness and participation around nutrition in the nutrition Seminars and National events	x	x	x	x
Output 4.1. Digital information channels are used to convert information about NIPN				
Create a NIPN website and include latest and most relevant information, the summary statistics from the NIPN and the links to the NIPN Data Repository	x	x	x	x
Use Facebook and twitter to convey NIPN messages and visibility.	x	x	x	x
Sponsor different events /community interventions: public events such as tree planting, walking, great marathon, school feeding programs, and other calendar events	x		x	
Ensure that branding on nutrition and NIPN reaches big Public Relations events, such as school feeding programs	x	x	x	x
Output 4.2. The Press is informed of all relevant NIPN events and outreach activities				
Produce and share dedicated NIPN info packs for the press	x		x	
Address media queries timely	x	x	x	x
Extract NIPN calendar events on NIPN website	x	x	x	x
Output 4.3. NIPN outputs and experiences are known also at international level				
Senior NIPN staff will participate in at least one international event per year to promote NIPN outputs and experiences				x
Experience sharing with international NIPN keyholders reported on NIPN website	x		x	
Output 4.4. NPN applies adequate branding and visibility				
Develop branding guidelines and communication templates		x		
Communicate all publications and events related to the NIPN with nutrition stakeholders' partners	x	x	x	x
Ensure partners' contribution are duly acknowledged through proper branding	x	x	x	x

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