

Strengthening the public sector and policy environment for large-scale food fortification (LSFF)

in the Global Programme “Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience”

Context

The triple burden of malnutrition affects billions of people around the world. About 800 million people are chronically undernourished and about two billion are overweight or obese. About two billion people – almost a third of the world’s population – suffer from micronutrient deficiencies, or ‘hidden hunger’. Women of reproductive age (15-49 years) and children under the age of two are more severely affected than other age groups. Globally, they suffer disproportionately from iron, folic acid, vitamin A and zinc deficiencies. This has serious consequences, as it weakens the immune system, making people more susceptible to infectious diseases, and increases the prevalence of child mortality. Adequate micronutrient intake is critical for a child’s development, especially during the first 1,000 days of life, from the beginning of pregnancy to the age of two. Alongside the promotion of an adequate diet and supplementation, large-scale food fortification (LSFF) can address nutritional needs where malnutrition rates are high and food systems cannot meet these needs in an affordable manner. Fortification of staple foods (e.g., cooking oil, flour, rice) with micronutrients is a proven and effective, low-cost intervention to reduce micronutrient deficiencies.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) in 2017 as a framework for cooperation that further their respective missions, including promoting better nutrition. Under this MoU, this cooperation is being implemented in three countries of the Global Programme “Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience”: Burkina Faso, India, and Madagascar. In Burkina Faso, the cooperation is extended to

selected members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) through cooperation with the West African Health Organisation (WAHO).

Activities focus on capacity development for the public sector, including regulation, setting standards, promoting data and evidence-based decision-making. LSFF can only make an effective contribution to food and nutrition security if it is embedded in a holistic strategy that focuses on healthy, balanced, and nutritious diets, which remain at the centre of BMZ’s efforts, and avoids negative impacts on domestic food production and processing. This cooperation is thus in line with the BMZ strategy “Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems”. This partnership between GIZ and the foundation brings together and creates synergies between the two organisations’ technical, institutional, partnership and development policy approaches and experience to achieve the common goal of better nutrition.

The total budget of the co-financing is € 20 million.

Objective

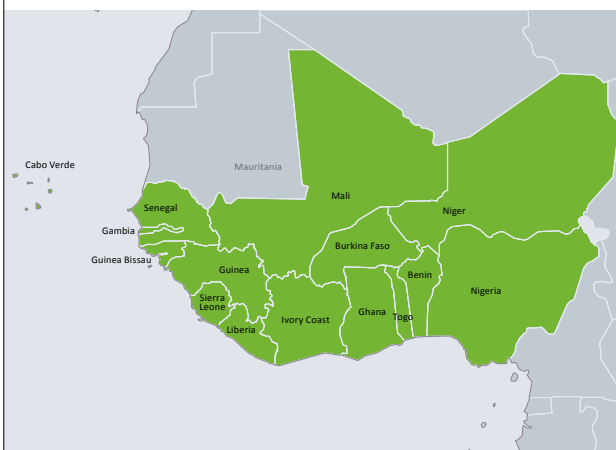
The objective of this partnership is to strengthen the capacity of the public sector and the policy environment in Burkina Faso and West Africa, India, and Madagascar to advise governments on how to implement existing LSFF policies more effectively and to monitor the corresponding quality standards.



Activities

Burkina Faso & ECOWAS

In **Burkina Faso**, the project strengthens the country's National Fortification Alliance in its mandate to coordinate national food fortification activities, to improve compliance with standards and regulations, and to support the successful implementation of the country's strategy to address micronutrient deficiencies. GIZ supports the alliance in raising awareness of the benefits of a diverse diet for improved health outcomes, including fortified foods where appropriate, and of the national fortification logo. At **West African regional level**, GIZ supports **WAHO** together with other stakeholders in identifying learning experiences on LSFF from other ECOWAS countries and in sharing them for integration into national nutrition policies. In addition, cross-regional communication approaches on fortified foods will be developed with WAHO and information platforms for better consumer awareness will be strengthened. In cooperation with WAHO and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the project supports the establishment of a regional fortification alliance and strengthens national fortification alliances in selected ECOWAS member states.



India

In **India**, the partnership contributes to the government's Mission POSHAN 2.0 – an integrated nutrition support programme of the Ministry of Women and Children Development. The project aims to improve the quality, coverage, and uptake of fortified rice in government social safety net programmes (Public Distribution System and Take-Home Rations, THR) and communication on its importance for a healthy diet through a digital platform. A focus is on digitising the supply chain tracking mechanism of THR which was piloted together with the Department of Women and Child Development in Maharashtra. To improve the delivery of nutrition services, GIZ develops a systematic capacity building programme together with Jhpiego to increase the ability of community based Anganwadi social workers to disseminate nutrition and hygiene messages in ten Prime Minister's Priority Districts, as well as through the development of a skills training programme for adolescent girls. Successful models will be scaled up and institutionalised in other districts.



Madagascar

In **Madagascar**, the project supports the National Food Fortification Alliance in operationalising the country's food fortification strategy. This includes building the capacity of key stakeholders, supporting the development of a communication strategy on healthy diets including micronutrient-rich foods, and identifying and supporting innovations to advance the country's strategy. To base fortification policy on solid evidence, GIZ is working with the Malagasy government and UNICEF to update national data on micronutrient deficiencies. In collaboration with IFPRI, a political economy analysis of food fortification identified framework conditions, constraints, and levers for LSFF. The project also supports the government in quality control of fortified staple foods, including by cooperating with UNICEF to strengthen integrated teams (I-teams) for iodised salt in the programme's target region of Atsimo Atsinanana.



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