

Strengthening the public 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 Gates Foundation (GF) in 2017 as a framework for cooperation that further their respective missions, including promoting better nutrition. This cooperation is being implemented in three countries of GIZ’s 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’s strategy “Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems”. This partnership between GIZ and the Gates 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

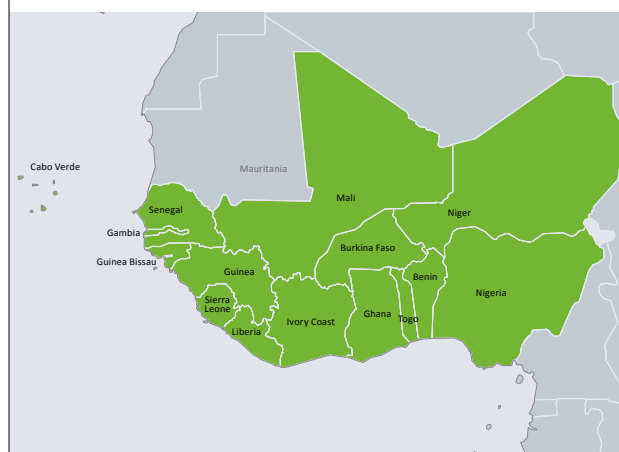
The objective of this partnership is to strengthen the capacity of the public sector and the policy environment in Burkina Faso and West Africa, India, and Madagascar to advise governments on how to implement existing LSFF policies more effectively and to monitor the corresponding quality standards.



Activities

In **Burkina Faso**, the project strengthens the country's national fortification alliance in its mandate to support the successful implementation of the country's strategy to address micronutrient deficiencies, to improve compliance with standards and regulations, and to coordinate activities of different stakeholders. GIZ, in cooperation with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Helen Keller International (HKI), supports the alliance in quality control and assurance of fortified foods imported to and produced in the country, in improving access to micronutrient premixes needed for fortification, and, together with consumer associations, in raising awareness of the benefits of a diverse diet for improved health outcomes, including fortified foods where appropriate. Similar support is being provided by CRS and HKI to national fortification alliances in selected ECOWAS member countries.

At **West African regional level**, GIZ is supporting **WAHO**, together with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and other stakeholders, in coordinating fortification initiatives through the establishment of a regional fortification alliance, and in standardising and harmonising fortification norms and regulations. This includes harmonising the labelling of fortified foods across countries in the region. The project is also working to identify and share learning experiences on LSFF from other ECOWAS countries for integration into national nutrition policies.





In **India**, the partnership actively supports the government's Mission POSHAN 2.0 – an integrated nutrition support programme led by the Ministry of Women and Children Development (MWCD). The project aims to improve the quality, coverage, and uptake of fortified rice in government social safety net programmes. As part of this effort, the project, in collaboration with the Department of Women and Child Development, has successfully upscaled a digital tool to track the supply chain of “Take-Home Rations”, reaching approximately 6.4 million vulnerable people in Maharashtra. This tool is now being rolled out across the state.

To strengthen technical capabilities, Technical Support Units (TSU) in five Indian states are being strengthened by project partner PATH to serve as key providers of technical assistance to stakeholders involved in nutrition interventions, including government officials, laboratory staff, fortified rice producers, and frontline nutrition workers. The project has developed a social behaviour change campaign and media dissemination plan in Punjab and Tamil Nadu to increase the uptake of fortified rice and double fortified salt. A South-South exchange of experts from India, West Africa and Madagascar was initiated to promote mutual learning and to establish a Community of Practitioners (CoP) to strengthen LSFF governance.

To improve the delivery of nutrition services, project partner Jhpiego is developing a systematic capacity building programme to increase the ability of community workers (*Anganwadi* workers) to disseminate nutrition and hygiene messages in ten Prime Minister's Priority Districts, as well as Kaivalya Education Foundation (KEF) is developing a skills training programme for adolescent girls. Population Council (PC) has been engaged as Monitoring, Learning & Evaluation (MLE) partner for the components with MWCD (capacity building of Integrated Child Development Services' frontline functionaries and skilling of adolescent girls). Successful models from these interventions will be scaled up and institutionalised in other districts.



In **Madagascar**, the project supports the National Food Fortification Alliance (ANFA) in implementing the country's food fortification strategy. This includes building the capacity of key stakeholders, supporting the development and enforcement of standards, and conducting advocacy and communication on food fortification in collaboration with project partner Helen Keller International (HKI). To base fortification policy on solid evidence, GIZ is working with the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) of Madagascar and UNICEF to update national data on micronutrient deficiencies. In collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), a political economy analysis of food fortification has identified framework conditions, constraints, and levers for LSFF. The project is also working with ANFA to improve access to information on food fortification through the development of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and a virtual library.



A local laboratory for micronutrient analysis of food is established in partnership with the MIKASA research platform to reduce testing costs and to incentivise compliance and local fortification. The local cooperative MIRARY is being supported to develop a locally produced fortified bouillon cube as a pilot for the development of new fortification norms and as a business case for local food fortification. The project also supports the government in quality control of fortified staple foods by developing a national control system and by cooperating with UNICEF to strengthen integrated teams (I-teams) to check iodine contents of salt in the programme's target region of Atsimo Atsinanana.

Imprint

Published by:
Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices:
Bonn und Eschborn
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32+36
53113 Bonn, Germany
T +49 228 44 60-0
F +49 228 44 60-1766
E nutritionsecurity@giz.de
I www.giz.de

Programme:
Global Programme Food and Nutrition Security,
Enhanced Resilience

Responsible:
Julia Kirya, Rike Riesmeier, GIZ

Authors:
Rike Riesmeier, GIZ

Layout:
kipconcept gmbh, Bonn

Photo credits:
Pierre Laborde/Shutterstock (p. 1), GIZ (p. 2),
GIZ/Seinabou Ciss (p. 3), GIZ/Aissata Makamane (p. 4)

Bonn, May 2025