

**Project Evaluation Series**

**01/2023**

# **Evaluation of the project “Improving Food Security and Nutrition in the Gambia through Food Fortification”**

**Project code: GCP/GAM/038/EC**

**Follow-up report**

Evaluation of the project “Improving Food Security and Nutrition in the Gambia through Food Fortification” –Follow-up report					12/2023
Evaluation recommendation	Management response <b>Accepted,</b> <b>Partially accepted or</b> <b>Rejected</b>	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Description of actions actually taken, or reasons for actions not taken	MAR Score	Impact of, or changes resulted from taken actions
<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b></p> <p>FAO should continue strengthening operational and technical capacity in the Gambia together with increased investment in food fortification programming.</p> <p>Leveraging on the high relevance of industrial and biofortification as a tool to combat challenges of malnutrition in the Gambia, as well as FAO’s comparative advantage to contribute to the national and regional nutrition agenda, it is recommended that continued work on food fortification in the country is envisioned and advocated for in order to follow-up to the initiatives initiated by this project.</p> <p>Furthermore, in order to continue to achieve positive results in the area of food fortification, it is important that projects build solid monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E) systems that allow continuous monitoring of activities in the field. This would also facilitate direct attribution of results to FAO’s interventions.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>M&amp;E personnel will be included in future project conceptualization and initiation phase. Consideration will be given to facilitation and inclusion of all key issues in the drafting of the theory of change (TOC) statement.</p> <p>An M&amp;E strategy document that includes the indicator performance tracking tool, to monitor project activities especially field activities in a timely manner will be developed.</p>	The recommendation is fully implemented, on-going programming and performance tracking includes M&E personnel.	Excellent	A strengthened operational and technical capacity for the Gambia.
<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b></p> <p>FAO should develop more realistic results chain that can be relatively achieved within the project’s timeframe. Also, the activities should be sequenced to enable them build and gain traction from preceding ones. In this regard, FAO should consider conducting early surveys and more needs assessments to</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>FAO carries out required assessments/surveys before any interventions or project implementation activities. These are done through the TCPs and Funded cost sharing activities.</p> <p>Project timelines are set with the most realistic timeframes</p>	FAO is now setting results chain that can be relatively achieved within the project’s timeframe. Activities are sequenced to enable them build and gain traction from preceding ones. Early and	Good	Realistic timelines, emphasis on the TOC, better tracking and reporting on results.

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<p>determine the most suitable vehicle for food fortification before implementation starts.</p> <p>FAO should adopt the business model of Analyze-Act-Advocate. In this regard, the food consumption surveys to ensure that industrial and biofortification is undertaken using the major staple foods as the vehicles, as well as other needs assessments should precede all other activities; followed by the implementation of respective interventions including development of regulations and standards, the advocacy for the uptake of those interventions through behaviour change communication, and finally the monitoring and enforcement of the regulations and standards for the fortified foods.</p> <p>Realistic timeframes for the biofortification of food crops should be set. The length of time and processes to undertake crop trials, variety selection, on-farm testing, cataloguing and certifying the crop varieties, then releasing them for mass production should be factored before planning to increase the quality and quantity of biofortified foods within four years.</p>		<p>during project planning. For this project however, delays due to emerging global issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting change in work arrangements were not envisaged during this project planning phases.</p> <p>Project Management personnel will consider and incorporate appropriate risk management measures in anticipation of challenges such as the delays in the release of funds by the donor.</p> <p>Procurement bottlenecks are being reviewed in consideration of new work arrangements and measures to improve the capacity of the Country Office notwithstanding other challenges related to the business environment of the host country.</p> <p>Procurement plans will be developed, shared on time, duly monitored and mitigated as and when necessary.</p>	<p>regular surveys are encouraged.</p> <p>A procurement specialist is on board to strengthen delivery.</p> <p>An Annual Procurement Plan was developed and enacted in 2023.</p>		

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<p><b>Recommendation 3.</b></p> <p>To accelerate the pace of behaviour change on dietary habits, FAO should make sure that future projects include a strong knowledge management component. For instance, innovation and tools for knowledge management, a behaviour change communication strategy and systematic lessons learned gathering could be considered as core components of similar projects.</p> <p>Knowledge products that provide fit for purpose solutions based on the data and information collected, analysed and interpreted during implementation of the project should be developed. Examples of knowledge products could include policy briefs, guidelines, manuals, FAQs, etc. Methodologies for data collection could be in the form of (i) analytical reviews to inform and guide the fortification processes; (ii) case studies e.g on cost benefit analysis, and (iii) evaluation studies with counterfactuals exploring the linkages between intake of industrial and biofortified foods and the health status of the targeted beneficiaries.</p> <p>A core component of similar projects should be a behaviour change communication strategy which should include iterative strategies on how to encourage individuals and communities to change their behaviours and trigger them to adopt the uptake of industrial and biofortified foods. For upstream</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	Part of the M&E strategy document will include the lessons sharing and knowledge management component that will spell out how information for developing knowledge products will be developed, used and assessed.	Current and future projects include strong knowledge management and sharing of lessons learnt.	Good	Utilization of innovative tools for knowledge management and advocacy for change.

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activities, the strategy should encourage enforcement of the food fortification regulations and standards					
<p><b>Recommendation 4.</b></p> <p>Prior to project conceptualization, FAO should consider undertaking a stakeholder mapping to establish which other institutions are carrying out similar initiatives to ensure that strategic collaboration is maximized with initiatives already being implemented in the country.</p> <p>An example is collaboration with the African Development Bank in its project in the Gambia on the Rice Value Chain whose objective is to improve production, processing and marketing of rice locally in the Gambia and reduce high importation of rice into the country. In such a scenario, FAO would have collaborated with AfDB to ensure that fortification becomes a key component of the rice value chain.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>FAO fully coordinated stakeholder assessment and mapping at the time the project was conceptualized. FAO is the lead agency for the sector including for the UNCT's Results Group 3 on Agriculture and Natural Resources. FAO with its full organizational capacity and reach is at the forefront of collecting and sharing information to and from stakeholders, and providing platforms for collaboration. The examples listed are noted however they take the technical lead from FAO.</p> <p>The Rice Value Chain Project uses FAOs Farmer Field School approach and resources in its implementation. The inclusion of biofortification in the Gambia's food systems is evidenced by this Project's institutional policy support. The final choice and say to 'infuse'</p>	Stakeholder mapping is institutionalized in resource mobilization; strategic partnerships and collaboration are maximized.	Excellent	Better strategic inclusive collaboration.

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		and prioritize biofortification is the policy choice and prerogative of the relevant government institution.			
<p><b>Recommendation 5.</b></p> <p>It is recommended that in future projects, FAO develops structured exit strategies from the design stage to increase the probability of results sustainability.</p> <p>The exit strategies should also be monitored and commitments for continuation of activities once the project terminates secured, rather than leaving to chance of the sustainability elements embedded in the project design. This would increase the commitment and accountability from the partners responsible for the continuation of the project activities once the project comes to an end. It would also provide opportunity for the partners to incorporate into their plans the resources required to achieve a seamless continuation of the activities.</p>	<b>Partially accepted</b>	<p>Exit strategies should as observed be thought of at the design stage, broad parameters of such may be set in anticipation of strengthening commitment and accountability.</p> <p>The best time for an exit strategy development is at the time of best performance or around mid-term evaluation when identification of the goals achieved and challenges that would guide remaining deliverable including sustainability issues. No assessment can be made at design stage and implementation modalities could change. ToRs may then be developed and timelines be agreed for the development of an exit strategy.</p>	M&E team works with project teams and stakeholders to plan and develop exit strategies for projects after mid-term evaluations.	Good	Timely canvassing for the development and adoption of an exit strategy by implementing partners.

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		The M&E team will work with project teams and stakeholders to plan and develop exit strategies for projects after mid-term evaluations.			
<p><b>Recommendation 6.</b></p> <p>In future projects, FAO should ensure that the project design and interventions are gender responsive by, for instance, undertaking gender analyses as part of the inception phase. Women play a significant role in improving their household food security as they contribute to food production, enhance dietary quality, and consumption diversity.</p> <p>This would entail undertaking a gender analysis to understand how differential power relations and decision making between men and women, and differential access to productive tangible and intangible productive assets such as land, capital, tools and information leads to variations in nutritional outcomes on different members of the household. The gender analysis would reveal if the proposed project interventions would increase time demands on women who are already experiencing time poverty; if the beneficiaries lack the agency to make decisions on new agricultural practices and crop choices proposed by the project; and if the project further entrenches socially constructed gender roles through interventions that are perceived as the preserve of women.</p>	<b>Accepted</b>	<p>FAO mainstreams gender and inclusion of women and youths in its programmatic interventions. Gender analyses are conducted alongside other analyses.</p> <p>FAO projects are only endorsed if they have incorporated gender markers. However, conducting gender analysis as a stand alone assessment will be considered as a means to strengthen planned interventions for the benefit of women noting the importance and criticality of the role of women in achieving food and nutrition security in this instance at household level.</p>	<p>Gender analysis conducted and concluded in 2022.</p> <p>Strategy and intention in place to continually improve on mechanisms to avoid stereotyping women and assigning them roles defined by social constructs. Measures are taken to address inequalities and promote a human rights approach.</p>	Good	Gender responsive programming and analyses as part of the inception phase

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Regarding the enabling environment, future projects should subject the policies, plans and strategies to a gender marker to assess the extent to which the principal objectives or results in these instruments, aim at reducing gender inequalities by promoting positive social norms, support women’s agencies and skills to exercise their rights, and support systems and capacities for gender responsive and rights-based service provision.					



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