

Project Evaluation Series

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

Project code: GCP/GAM/038/EC

Annex 1. Terms of reference

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Abbreviations and acronyms

BH	Budget Holder
EM	Evaluation Manager
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
OED	Office of Evaluation of FAO
PTF	Project Task Force
TOC	theory of change
TORs	terms of reference

1. Introduction

1. In line with guidelines of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) will undertake the final evaluation of the project on 'Improving Food Security and Nutrition in the Gambia through Food Fortification', funded by the European Union (Contract reference number: FOOD/2016/380-042). The project started in 2017 and is expected to end on 28 February 2022. These terms of reference (TORs) have been prepared by OED to guide the evaluation on the basis of preliminary documentation review and consultations with the FAO Gambia country office. They present key elements that will shape the proposed evaluation by offering an evaluation roadmap and clarifying the roles of all stakeholders.
2. The evaluation will take place between October 2021 and February 2022. It will be managed by OED and will be conducted by an independent team comprising of an international consultant as the team leader and a national consultant. The evaluation represents an important opportunity to draw lessons from this experience that could be used later to inform future decisions regarding the implementation of similar initiatives, and to inform sustainability measures of the project results.
3. The TORs present in order: i) background and context of the evaluation with a summary of project details; ii) purpose and scope of the evaluation; iii) key evaluation questions; iv) methodology; v) evaluation team composition; vi) roles and responsibilities; vii) evaluation products; and viii) evaluation timeline.

2. Background¹

4. The Gambia is classified as a least developed, low-income food deficit country, with 10.3 percent of the population living in extreme poverty.² As of 2019, the agriculture sector provides employment for about three-quarters of the labor force and smallholder farmers supply about 90 percent of the domestically produced food.³ The Gambia's human development index (HDI) value for 2019 is 0.496 — which puts the country in the low human development category — positioning it at 172 out of 189 countries and territories.⁴
5. Malnutrition in all its forms remains a major challenge in the Gambia. Many children, especially in rural areas, are poorly nourished.⁵ According to the 2013 national Demographic Household Survey: one quarter of children under five were stunted and 11.5 percent wasted; two-thirds of children under five, one-third of pregnant women and 16 percent of lactating mothers had vitamin A deficiency; three-quarters of all women had iron deficiency, two-thirds of pregnant women and about half of lactating women were anaemic.⁶
6. At the time of the project's design, FAO Gambia considered that the Medical Research Council in the Gambia (MRC) reported that Gambians on average consumed only about one-third of the recommended 700-1 000mg of calcium per day. Micronutrient deficiencies have profoundly negative implications for child and maternal health and improving nutrition and food security was a priority concern for the government.
7. Prior to this intervention, regulations for food fortification only existed for iodized salt, and programs for providing some supplements (e.g. vitamin A and iron) to children under five and pregnant women were not sufficient.
8. In this context, opportunities were identified for low-cost food fortification in the Gambia, and FAO Gambia responded to the call for proposals for inclusive and sustainable value chains and food fortification, specifically lot 2 on food fortification and won one of the grants from the European Union worth about EUR 4 484 304.
9. The project aims at: i) supporting government capacity through provision of technical support for food fortification and associated legislation development; ii) institutional strengthening awareness raising; and iii) capacity building at community level. Overall, the project aims to contribute to the improved nutritional and health status of vulnerable populations suffering from micronutrient deficiencies throughout the Gambia; particularly women, girls and children, whose consumption of micronutrient fortified foods, should increase.⁷

¹ Based on information from the project documents.

² https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/AM2020/Global_POVEQ_GMB.pdf

³ <https://www.gafspfund.org/projects/gambia-agriculture-and-food-security-project>

⁴ <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/GMB.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/gambia/nutrition>

⁶ Demographic Household Survey 2013.

⁷ FAO 2016 Project Document

2.1 Project details

2.1.1 Overview

10. The project was initially designed as a 48-month project, beginning in 2017 and with an initial end date on 28 February 2021. The project then received a no-cost extension until 28 February 2022.
11. The main resource partner for this project is the European Union through the call for proposal for inclusive value chains and food fortification for EUR 5 million funding.
12. Details of the project are outlined in the table below:

Table 1. Basic project information

Project symbol	GCP/GAM/038/EC
Recipient countries	The Gambia
Resource partner	European Union Contract Reference Number: FOOD/2016/380-042
Implementing agency	FAO
European Union contribution/total budget:	EUR 5 151 132
Government/other counterparts	National Nutrition Agency; the Gambia Standards Bureau; Department of Agriculture; National Agriculture Research Institute; Food Safety and Quality Authority; Ministry of Health.
Starting date	March 2017
Initial date of project completion (original NTE)	28 February 2021
Revised project implementation end date	28 February 2022

Source: FAO. n.a. *Project document*. Rome.

FAO. n.a. FPMIS. In: *FAO*. Rome.

13. The action contributes to improving the nutritional and health status of vulnerable populations suffering from micronutrient deficiencies in the Gambia, in particular women, girls and children in the North Bank Region and in the Central River Region, who are expected to increase consumption of micronutrient fortified foods. The project aims to contribute to: i) improvements in health and nutrition indicators, especially the reduction of stunting and wasting; ii) normal cognitive development in children; iii) reduced anaemia among women; and iv) reduction in complications during pregnancy and maternal mortality.
14. More specifically, the food fortification action in the Gambia aims at leading towards the following improvements:
 - i. existence of legislation, regulation, policies and protocols to support food fortification that meet international standards of safety and quality and to promote bio-fortification;
 - ii. a strengthened system for food safety and quality to include food fortification, including bio-fortification; and

- iii. lessons learned and best practices will be documented to inform subsequent legislation, policies and programmes on:
 - impact: improve food security, nutrition and health of vulnerable women and children in the Gambia in project regions by reducing micronutrient deficiency; and
 - outcome: increase access and consumption of industrially fortified and bio fortified foods by women of child-bearing age and children under five years in the Central River Region and the North Bank Region.
15. Interventions take place at three levels: i) legislation/strategic; ii) institutional; and iii) community level, and aim at achieving the following results:
 - i. Output 1: the legislative, regulatory, policy, institutional and governance environment for food fortification is improved.
 - ii. Output 2: production of fortified foods and bio fortified crops in quantity and quality increased.
 - iii. Output 3: improved social marketing and communication with integrated nutrition interventions.

2.1.2 Implementation management

16. FAO is contractually responsible for the overall project implementation and all its outputs and works directly with the following government institutions: the National Nutrition Agency; the National Agriculture Research Institute; the Gambia Standards Bureau; the Department of Agriculture Food Technology Services; the Ministry of Health's Directorate of Health Promotion and Education; the National Seed Secretariat; and the Food Safety and Quality Authority. FAO Gambia bears the overall legal responsibility for the project implementation, produces progress and financial reports and submits them to the European Union and abides by all contractual terms and conditions set out in the contribution agreement with the European Union in the Gambia.
17. The implementation team is composed of a national coordinator; an operations officer; national nutrition experts; national communications experts; a national monitoring and evaluation expert; and administrative support staff.
18. The National Food Fortification Steering Committee and the National Alliance for Food Fortification were established to supervise the project implementation and to address policy issues on food and nutrition security, respectively. FAO Gambia coordinates every quarter the national supportive supervision.

2.1.3 Project stakeholders and beneficiaries

19. FAO - responsible for the overall implementation of the project, ensuring compliance with the European Union rules and regulations. More specifically, this includes the FAO Representation in the Gambia, technical personnel from relevant units in the FAO Subregional Office for West Africa, the Regional Office of Africa (RAF) and FAO headquarters.
20. The European Union – the resource partner.
21. Project's targets:

- i. private sector:
 - private millers and processing plants:
 - wheat flour milling company in the Gambia - NESSIM Flour Mill
 - the Gambia Milling Corporation
 - ii. public sector:
 - Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources:
 - National Agriculture Research Institute
 - Department of Agriculture Extension Services
 - Department of Agriculture Food Technology Services
 - National Seed Secretariat
 - National Nutrition Agency
 - Food Safety and Quality Authority
 - the Gambia Standard Bureau
 - Ministry of Health
 - Directorate of Health Promotion and Education
22. Final beneficiaries:
- i. All of the Gambia's population with increased awareness of the importance of micronutrients and food fortification.
 - ii. Sixty-five percent of the Gambia's population with access to fortified flour and rice.
 - iii. At least 20 000 vulnerable women and girls of reproductive age and children in the North Bank Region and in the Central River Region with increased access to biofortified crops. Women and girls with increased knowledge and skills about the production of bio-fortified foods and their cultivation as part of a mixed farming system that promotes dietary diversification.
23. Civil society:
- i. United Purpose (former Concern Universal): collaboration and complementarity of activities.
 - ii. National Alliance and Consumer Associations: awareness creation.
24. Other United Nations (UN) agencies:
- i. World Health Organization (WHO): to provide technical support to the Ministry of Health for health indicators monitoring.
 - ii. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): to participate in the drafting of the legislation and in the procurement of fortificants.

2.1.4 Theory of change

25. The project document does not propose any theory of change (TOC), but it has a detailed results matrix. If found to be useful, a TOC will be developed by the evaluation team in consultation with the project team.

3. Evaluation purpose and scope

26. As the project enters its last phase of implementation, the final evaluation aims at providing accountability for results achieved to resource partners, FAO Management and national government agencies. The evaluation will seek to draw lessons from the implementation processes that could inform future programmes or projects and decisions by the operational partners, project teams and FAO at all levels.
27. The main audience and intended users of the evaluation are:
- i. The FAO Country Office, the project teams at FAO headquarters technical teams and at FAO RAF that will use the evaluation findings and lessons to finalize the project,⁸ plan for sustainability of results achieved, and improve formulation and implementation of similar projects.
 - ii. The project's counterparts, including the National Nutrition Agency and the Ministry of Agriculture, and other relevant partners that could use the evaluation findings and conclusions for future planning and, if necessary, corrective action.
 - iii. The European Union, as the donor, will benefit from the evaluation for future planning and strategic positioning in the country and in the region, and in future projects with similar objectives.
28. The final evaluation will cover the entire implementation period, including all project components. The evaluation team, in consultation with the project team, will select a sample of sites for field visits⁹ and identify stakeholders to be involved and consulted.

⁸ If evaluation timeframe permits.

⁹ If possible, with the current COVID-19 related travel restrictions.

4. Evaluation objective and key questions

29. The final evaluation will assess the results of the project as specified in the project document and their value to identified stakeholders at different levels. The evaluation will also review the processes followed, while taking into consideration the pre-conditions, linkages and/or partnerships or other arrangements in place that have contributed to – or hindered – the implementation of project activities. These will provide lessons learned that will inform future projects.
30. The evaluation will cover the following areas: relevance; effectiveness; efficiency of delivery; sustainability of project outcomes; and gender equality.¹⁰ It will generate recommendations for the improvement of future projects.
31. The following key evaluation questions will guide the overall assessment. Sub-questions and specific methodological approaches will be further refined during the inception phase of the evaluation by the evaluation team:¹¹
- i. Relevance:
 - To what extent is the project relevant to the needs and priorities of the national stakeholders, including the government?
 - To what extent is the project relevant to community beneficiaries, in particular vulnerable women and girls of reproductive age, and children in the North Bank Region and in the Central River Region?
 - To what extent is the project relevant to the broader sustainable development initiatives, i.e. Agenda 2030, to FAO Strategic Framework and to the FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF)?
 - Was the project design and the logical framework appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes?
 - To what extent is the technical support provided by FAO relevant to the country?
 - To what extent is the geographical targeting of the project pertinent?
 - ii. Effectiveness:
 - To what extent has the project achieved its impact, outcome and its related outputs (listed below), and were there any unintended results?
 - Impact: improve food security, nutrition and health of vulnerable women and children in the Gambia in project regions by reducing micronutrient deficiency.
 - Outcome: increase access and consumption of industrial and bio fortified foods by women of child-bearing age and children under 5 years in the Central River Region and the North Bank Region.
 - Output 1: the legislative, regulatory, policy, institutional and governance environment for food fortification is improved.

¹⁰ FAO's Policy on Gender Equality <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3205e/i3205e.pdf> will constitute an important base for the evaluation.

¹¹ The evaluation team will produce an inception report containing a more detailed methodology and tools.

- Output 2: production of fortified foods and bio fortified crops in quantity and quality increased.
 - Output 3: improved social marketing and communication with integrated nutrition interventions.
 - What are the enabling/constraining factors influencing the achievement and non-achievements of the outcomes and outputs?
 - To what extent is the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system appropriate in monitoring and supporting the implementation and enhancing the effectiveness of the targeted results?
 - How have the project partnerships contributed to the project results?
 - To what extent has the project been able to build on ongoing initiatives (reforms, strategies/plans, processes) to achieve its results?
 - How effective is the current project governance structure and operational modality, including management, in contributing to the overall achievement of the programme objectives?
 - How effective was the communication strategy in achieving the result of increasing awareness of the entire population of the Gambia?
- iii. Efficiency of delivery:
- Has the project been implemented in an efficient manner?
 - To what extent did the project activities, the institutional arrangements, the partnerships in place and the resources available contribute to, or impede, the achievement of the project's results and objectives?
 - How efficient is the collaboration among partners and project beneficiaries?
 - Were there any complementarities or duplication with other activities in the country?
 - To what extent was the project able to adapt its management, based on learning, and to the changing context?
 - To what extent was the project affected by COVID-19 and how did it adapt its management?
- iv. Sustainability:
- What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after the end of the project?
 - What are the risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results and what are the factors that have contributed to it?
- v. Gender:
- To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing, monitoring, and implementing and reporting of the project?
 - Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures gender responsive participation and benefits?

5. Methodology

32. The evaluation will adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms & Standards¹² and be in line with OED Manual and methodological guidelines and practices. The evaluation will adopt a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. Triangulation of evidence and information gathered will underpin its validation and analysis, and will support its conclusions and recommendations.
33. The evaluation will be results-focused and will use the above key questions as main areas of analysis. The sub-questions will be further elaborated in an evaluation matrix and developed during the inception phase of the evaluation.
34. The evaluation will benefit from a desk review of existing documents and other secondary data. Relevant documents for the evaluation include: i) existing project documents and reports (for example, annual work plans, project implementation review, progress reports, management meeting records, backstopping missions); and iii) the available M&E data. The desk-review will also be a key source of information to the inception phase.
35. The inception report will complement the TORs and contribute to guide the evaluation: it will provide the evaluation team with a mutual understanding of the organization of the work. It will encompass a stakeholder analysis, detailed information on the evaluation approach and methodology, the evaluation matrix and an update of the limitations and risks, timeline and deliverables of the evaluation.
36. Final decisions about the evaluation design and data collection methods for the evaluation will emerge from consultations among the project team and the evaluation team about what is appropriate and feasible to answer the evaluation questions, in light of the COVID-19 related travel restrictions.
37. The evaluation will make use of primary data sources through an extensive review of documents produced by the project. These will be a key source of information to the inception phase, and ultimately, to provide answers to all the evaluation questions. It will include *inter alia* prodoc, concept notes, progress narrative reports, workshop and training reports and communication and outreach materials.
38. The evaluation will also use semi-structured questionnaires with key informant interviews and with focus group discussions where possible. These will be developed by the evaluation team with support from the FAO Evaluation Manager (EM).
39. In consultation with the project team, the evaluation team will identify the assessment sites.
40. A detailed list of stakeholder respondents to participate in this evaluation as informants will be developed by the evaluation team with support from the FAO EM and the FAO

¹² More details on the UNEG Norms and Standards can be found here.
<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21>

project implementation team at country level. At a minimum, the following respondents will be included:

- i. personnel (at headquarters and country-level);
 - ii. resource partners;
 - iii. government officials;
 - iv. FAO implementation partners (including technical experts and senior management in relevant UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, technical agencies, etc.); and
 - v. any relevant private sector service providers; protocols for interviews will be developed by the evaluation team prior to the evaluation data collection phase.
41. The draft evaluation report is expected in January 2022 (see section 9 below).

6. Evaluation team composition and profile

42. The evaluation team will be composed of two external experts, one evaluation team leader and a national consultant. The team will work under the guidance of the OED EM. The external experts selected for this evaluation, will have experience and expertise in two or more of the following areas: project evaluation, agricultural development, food security and nutrition, institutional capacity building, policy development and gender. All consultants will have some prior experience in evaluation, or M&E and some knowledge of the institutional, sociocultural and agricultural context of the country.
43. The evaluation team will be independent from any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing or advising any aspect of the project. All team members will sign OED's declaration of interest form. To the extent possible, the evaluation team will be balanced in terms of geographical and gender representation to ensure diversity and complementarity of perspectives.

7. Roles and responsibilities

44. OED, in particular the EM has developed these TORs with inputs from the project team and from documentation review. The EM has also been responsible for the identification of the evaluation team members.¹³ The EM will brief the evaluation team on the evaluation methodology and process and will review the final draft report for quality assurance purposes in terms of presentation, compliance with the TORs and timely delivery, quality, clarity and soundness of evidence provided and of the analysis supporting conclusions and recommendations in the evaluation report. OED will also have the responsibility to follow up with the FAO Budget Holder (BH) for the timely preparation of the Management response.
45. In the exercise of the quality assurance function, OED may require textual and substantial changes on the report. Moreover, being the principal author of the report, OED holds an option to make final changes to the composition of the report as it deems necessary, and in line with FAO/UNEG evaluation standards and policies.
46. The Project Task Force (PTF), which includes the FAO BH, the Lead Technical Officer (LTO), and the team of the project to be evaluated are responsible for initiating the evaluation process, providing inputs to the draft version of the TORs, especially the description of the background and context chapter, and supporting the evaluation team during its work. They are required to meet with the evaluation team, make available information and documentation as necessary, and comment on the draft report. Involvement of different members of the PTF will depend on respective roles and participation in the project.
47. The PTF will also assist the EM in the identification of potential consultants, as needed, and in the organization of the data collection. The BH is also responsible for leading and coordinating the preparation of the FAO's Management response and the follow-up report to the evaluation, fully supported in this task by the LTO and other members of the PTF. OED guidelines for the Management response and the follow-up report provide necessary details on this process.
48. OED has the responsibility to follow up with the BH for the timely preparation of the Management response and follow-up report to the evaluation.
49. The evaluation team, in this case composed by the evaluation team leader and the team member, will be responsible for further developing the evaluation methodology, including its tools and frameworks, and applying it; for conducting the evaluation and for drafting the evaluation report. The evaluation team will agree on the outline of the report early in the evaluation process, based on the template provided by OED. The evaluation team will also be free to expand the scope, criteria, questions and issues listed above, based on discussions with the EM and where required, consultations with PTF. The evaluation team will be fully responsible for its report which may not reflect the views neither of the government nor of FAO. An evaluation report is not subject to technical clearance by FAO although OED is responsible for the quality assurance of all evaluation reports.

¹³ The responsibility for the administrative procedures for recruitment of the team, will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

50. The evaluation team leader guides and coordinates the evaluation team member in his/her specific work, discusses his/her findings, conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation team leader prepares and revises the draft and the final evaluation report, consolidating the inputs from the team member with their own.

8. Evaluation products (deliverables)

51. This section describes the key evaluation products the evaluation team will be accountable for producing. These products include:
- i. An inception report for the use of the team and OED including an evaluation matrix and a stakeholder analysis: the evaluation matrix will show how each evaluation question will be answered by way of: proposed methods, proposed sources of data and data collection procedures, interview guides for relevant country-level stakeholders, and an indicative workplan for the evaluation.
 - ii. Draft evaluation report: the project team and key stakeholders will be provided the draft evaluation report to ensure that the evaluation meets the required quality criteria. The draft report will illustrate the evidence found that responds to the evaluation questions listed in the TORs; the inputs from the reviewers will be incorporated by the evaluation team as considered pertinent.
 - iii. Final evaluation report: the final evaluation report will include an executive summary. The report will be prepared in English with numbered paragraphs, following the OED template for report writing. Supporting data and analysis will be annexed to the report when considered important to complement the main report. Translations in other languages of the Organization, if required, will be FAO's responsibility.

9. Evaluation timeline

52. The evaluation will be conducted according to the following time frame:

Table 2. Evaluation timeline

Task	Period	Responsibility
Launch of the evaluation	Sept 2021	EM
TOR finalization	Nov-Dec 2021	EM and the PTF
Team identification and recruitment	Oct-Nov 2021	EM
Documentation review	Oct-Nov 2021	Evaluation team
Inception report	Nov 2021	Evaluation team
Data collection planning – travel arrangements and organization of the agenda/travel itinerary for the field mission	Nov-Dec 2021	Evaluation team with support of EM and project team
Data collection	Dec 2021 to Jan 2022	Evaluation team
Presentation of preliminary findings	Feb 2022	Evaluation team
First draft report for OED review	Feb 2022	Evaluation team
Circulation of first draft for comments (project team, BH, LTO and key stakeholders)	Feb 2022	EM
Production of final draft	Feb 2022	Evaluation team
Circulation of final report and publication	End Feb-March 2022	EM
Management response	1 month after the final report is issued	BH
Follow-up report	1 year after the Management response is issued	BH

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

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