



GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA

Capacity Strengthening Plan for the National Working Group on Food Fortification (NWGFF) in Uganda

FY 2022–2024

Acknowledgements

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Contents

Acronyms	iv
Background	i
The NWGFF Capacity Strengthening Plan	i
Use of the Capacity Strengthening Plan	2
Capacity Strengthening Plan	3

Acronyms

GOU	Government of Uganda
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries
MDA	ministries, departments, and agencies
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOH	Ministry of Health
MTIC	Ministry of Trade Industry and Cooperatives
NDA	National Drug Authority
NITA-U	National Information Technology Authority-Uganda
NWGFF	National Working Group on Food Fortification
SOPs	standard operating procedures
TOR	terms of reference
UNBS	Uganda National Bureau of Standards

Background

The Government of Uganda (GOU) spearheaded efforts to reduce micronutrient deficiencies and demonstrated commitment by adopting industrial food fortification as one of the cost-effective interventions to reduce the disease burden in the population. In 2002, the GOU, through the Ministry of Health (MOH), established the National Working Group on Food Fortification (NWGFF), a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary committee to oversee and guide implementation of the food fortification program. The NWGFF is composed of government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) responsible for designing and regulating the policy environment for food fortification; private sector organizations, including the food industries that implement the regulation by fortifying foods; civil society actors who advocate for consumer access to fortified foods; members of academic institutions who guide research and innovations; and development partners that provide technical and logistical support.

The NWGFF serves as an advisory body with technical sub-committees that guide food fortification implementation. The working group has achieved many milestones in the past two decades, including enacting regulations; creating standards and guidelines on food fortification; developing a multi-year national food fortification strategy; training food processors on theoretical and practical food fortification applications for maize and wheat flours, salt, edible oils and fats; monitoring fortified foods; and raising the appropriate awareness of fortified foods as a public health intervention.

As part of our capacity strengthening core-funded activity, USAID Advancing Nutrition conducted a baseline survey to assess the NWGFF's functionality and identify opportunities and strategic sustainable actions to strengthen the working group's operations. The survey sought to understand current interactions between food fortification stakeholders for information sharing and coordination of related activities.

USAID Advancing Nutrition disseminated survey results to NWGFF members during a workshop. Participants also discussed other areas that the NWGFF and member institutions identified as having priority capacity challenges to address to strengthen food fortification, including governance, institutionalization, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilization. Key recommendations and actions derived from NWGFF members to address these priority capacity challenges formed the basis of a capacity strengthening plan; the next section describes this plan.

The NWGFF Capacity Strengthening Plan

This capacity strengthening plan for the NWGFF is a national toolkit to enhance the functionality and sustainability of the food fortification program through the NWGFF and member institutions. Table I below gives an overview of the plan.

The plan is organized under four capacity areas, as reflected in Table I:

1. Coordination and governance
2. Institutionalization
3. Monitoring and evaluation
4. Resource mobilization

Table I also describes the plan's components, listed below:

Capacity challenges. Capacity challenges are specific systems, processes, or skills under a broader capacity area that the NWGFF has identified as having priority gaps that need to be strengthened. Each capacity area includes one to three identified priority capacity gaps with a short description.

Activities to address gaps identified. Activities to address identified gaps are the interventions that the NWGFF identified to address capacity challenges. The NWGFF also identified and agreed upon

additional sub-activities, also listed in Table I. Areas where USAID Advancing Nutrition will provide support are noted.

Expected outputs and outcomes. These are key outputs and outcomes for each of the identified capacity strengthening actions.

Responsible institution. Institutions responsible to conduct the agreed actions to address gaps are listed here, based on the mandates of the NWGFF and key institutions. Overall, the MOH Nutrition Division will be responsible for ensuring that key institutions implement the activities based on their mandates.

Timeframe. The plan provides a timeline by quarter and by GOU financial year for when NWGFF and member institutions anticipate activities to be completed. USAID Advancing Nutrition will identify support activities within the implementation timelines.

Internal/external source of funding. This indicates which activities require internal support only by the individual MDAs through central GOU funds and which require additional external support by partners.

Use of the Capacity Strengthening Plan

The capacity strengthening plan will be a living document that the NWGFF Secretariat and NWGFF member institutions will review and update on a regular basis to provide status updates on implementation of priority actions, track areas of completion, and document activity implementation challenges. During the NWGFF's quarterly meetings, the MOH and key institutions will share progress on implementing the plan with key stakeholders.

USAID Advancing Nutrition will support the GOU to conduct a midline review of the capacity strengthening plan in FY23 to evaluate its effectiveness in strengthening the NWGFF's coordination efforts and improving the food fortification program. As part of USAID Advancing Nutrition's FY23 work plan, the project will support the MOH and key stakeholders to track and assess progress, identify any shifts in priorities for the plan's activities, and identify additional actions needed to ensure completion of activities.

Capacity Strengthening Plan

Capacity area	Capacity challenge	Activities to address gaps identified	Sub-activities	Expected results	Responsible institution	Timeframe (FY2022/23)				Timeframe (FY2023/24)				Internal and/or external source of funding
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
I. Coordination and governance	Communication and information sharing on food fortification across all MDAs, the private sector, and other stakeholders is limited and inconsistent ; this applies to topics such as: - new developments - who to contact for any need/support - when and how to get information or support.	Request Institutions to nominate members to update the NWGFF committee. The Secretariat to make deliberate efforts to engage and share routine updates/information with all the institutions	I. NWGFF will track engagement of key stakeholders and implementation of the priority actions by the NWGFF and member institutions based on mandates.	Improved coordination and information sharing with all the NWGFF members and key stakeholders through effective engagement and information sharing (virtually and through in-person meetings)	NWGFF Secretariat Nutrition Division, MOH		X	X	X					Internal and external

Capacity area	Capacity challenge	Activities to address gaps identified	Sub-activities	Expected results	Responsible institution	Timeframe (FY2022/23)				Timeframe (FY2023/24)				Internal and/or external source of funding	
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
I. Coordination and governance <i>(continued)</i>	The reviewed terms of reference (TORs)— which define the roles and mandates of the NWGFF, Secretariat, sub-committees, and member institutions have not been finalized and approved.	Fast-track the finalization and approval of the TORs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold meetings with key stakeholders to finalize the draft TORs. 2. Hold a validation meeting with the NWGFF for endorsement. 3. The NWGFF will present the endorsed TORs to the Nutrition Technical Working Group for approval before submitting to the Director General of Health Services and MOH senior management for final approval. 4. Share approved TORs with NWGFF member institutions. 	<p>TORs finalized and approved.</p> <p>TORs shared with the NWGFF and member Institutions Functional NWGFF and member institutions based on approved TORs.</p>	<p>MOH Nutrition Division</p> <p>NWGFF member institutions</p>	X	X								Internal and external

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						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
2. Institutionalization	The majority of MDAs (enforcers and regulators) do not plan and allocate funding and resources for food fortification activities, thus most fortification activities have been supported largely by partners, which is not sustainable.	Integrate prioritized food fortification activities into annual MDA work plans and budgets.	<p>1. Support MDAs to identify priority food fortification activities in their roles and mandates.</p> <p>2. Conduct advocacy dialogue meetings with senior management of MDAs for allocation of funding for prioritized food fortification activities.</p> <p>3. Support integration of prioritized activities during the GOU annual planning and budgeting cycle.</p>	<p>Identified priority food fortification activities.</p> <p>Integration of these activities into MDAs' annual work plans and budgets.</p> <p>Documented commitment from MDAs following advocacy dialogue meetings.</p> <p>Funding allocation on prioritized food fortification activities by MDAs.</p>	<p>MDA focal point or focal department</p> <p>MDA policy and planning units</p> <p>MOH</p> <p>The NWGFF</p>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Internal and external

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						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
2. Institutionalization <i>(continued)</i>	Standard operating procedures (SOPs), guidelines, and tools for enforcement and monitoring of the food fortification program are lacking.	Develop SOPs, guidelines, and tools to enforce food fortification regulations and regulatory monitoring and fast-track implementation.	<p>1. Hold consultative meetings with key stakeholders to develop and validate the SOPs, guidelines, and tools.</p> <p>2. Share the SOPs, guidelines, and tools with the NWGFF and member institutions for approval.</p> <p>3. Fast-track use of the tools by the NWGFF and member institutions.</p>	<p>Approved SOPs, guidelines, and tools.</p> <p>MDAs' use of the SOPs, guidelines, and tools for enforcement of food fortification regulations and regulatory monitoring.</p> <p>Shared reports showing progress in compliance to standards by the private sector, as well as status of food fortification program implementation.</p>	MOH MDAs		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Internal and external

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2. Institutionalization (continued)	Technical staff and technical capacity for key institutions to enforce and monitor the food fortification program are inadequate.	Build the capacity of staff through orientation on expectations and roles, and recruit technical staff to enforce and monitor the food fortification program.	<p>1. Conduct refresher training and orientation of officials from the NWGFF member institutions e.g. MOH, MTIC, NDA, UNBS, URA, private sector, academia on the expectations for enforcement and regulatory monitoring of the food fortification program.</p> <p>2. Recruit technical experts or assign officials to implement food fortification activities.</p>	<p>Refresher trainings and orientations of key institutions conducted. Technical staff recruited.</p> <p>Implementation of institutional mandates on food fortification fast-tracked.</p>	<p>MOH</p> <p>Ministry of Trade Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC)</p> <p>The National Drug Authority (NDA)</p> <p>Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS)</p> <p>Ministry of Education and Sport (MOES)</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries (MAAIF)</p> <p>Partners that support food fortification e.g. USAID Advancing Nutrition, USAID Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition</p>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Internal and external

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3. Monitoring and evaluation	The current monitoring and evaluation plan attached to the food fortification strategy has not been implemented, as the monitoring and evaluation data elements and indicators were not mainstreamed into institutional routine activities and plans.	Mainstream food fortification data elements and indicators in institutional activities plans.	<p>1. Identify key data elements and indicators for key institutions based on mandates, and obtain NWGFF endorsement.</p> <p>2. Develop and harmonize data collection tools for the identified data elements and indicators.</p> <p>3. Provide technical support to institutions to integrate the identified data elements and indicators to relevant departments.</p> <p>4. Track the implementation and share periodic reports to the NWGFF and relevant stakeholders.</p>	<p>Identified data elements and indicators.</p> <p>NWGFF endorsement of the data elements and indicators.</p> <p>Data collection tools developed and harmonized by the NWGFF</p> <p>Integration of data elements and indicators into institutions' routine activities and plans.</p> <p>Periodic reports shared with the NWGFF and key stakeholders to inform on progress of implementation of the food fortification program.</p>	<p>MOH</p> <p>NWGFF</p> <p>MDAs</p> <p>Private sector</p>				X	X	X	X	X	Internal and external

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3. Monitoring and evaluation <i>(continued)</i>	NWGFF and key institutions' use of evidence-based data on food fortification to inform programming is limited.	Hold evidence-based collaborative learning events with key institutions to encourage use of data in policy making, decision making, and programming for food fortification.	1. Identify all evidence-based data on food fortification in Uganda and from other sources. 2. Conduct learning events to share existing evidence-based data and build consensus on how the data could be used to strengthen the food fortification program.	Evidence-based data identified and shared. Areas for improving programming identified. Use of evidence-based data to inform programming documented by key institutions.	MOH NWGFF		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Internal and external

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						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
3. Monitoring and evaluation <i>(continued)</i>	A centralized information system or resource hub on food fortification that is accessible to the NWGFF, member institutions, and other stakeholders for knowledge sharing, for reference to inform progress made, and to scale up the food fortification program does not exist.	Establish a functional centralized information system or resource hub accessible to the NWGFF, member institutions, and all stakeholders.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify resources and data elements and indicators from stakeholders. 2. Engage stakeholders to brainstorm how to operationalize the system. 3. Engage the National Information Technology Authority-Uganda (NITA-U) for technical assistance if needed to link data systems across the MDAs. 	<p>Resources and data elements or indicators profiled</p> <p>A functional centralized information system</p> <p>A centralized resource hub for food fortification</p>	<p>MOH</p> <p>MTIC</p> <p>NITA-U</p>			X	X	X	X					Internal and external

Capacity area	Capacity challenge	Activities to address gaps identified	Sub-activities	Expected results	Responsible institution	Timeframe (FY2022/23)				Timeframe (FY2023/24)				Internal and/or external source of funding
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4. Resource mobilization	Food fortification has been partner dependent, partly due to the national food fortification strategy not having a resource mobilization plan to bridge public and private sector resource gaps for implementation of the food fortification program.	Develop and implement a resource mobilization plan to sustain implementation of the food fortification program across MDAs and the private sector.	<p>1. Hold consultative meetings to develop a resource mobilization strategy for food fortification activities.</p> <p>2. Hold dialogue meetings with key stakeholders, including donors and development partners, to lobby for resources and funding for food fortification.</p>	<p>Resource mobilization plan developed.</p> <p>Sustainable funding for food fortification program activities across all institutions.</p>	<p>MOH</p> <p>MDAs</p> <p>The NWGFF</p> <p>The NWGFF policy and planning sub-committee</p>			X	X	X	X			Internal and external