**Developing a Market-Driven Approach for the Production of Enriched Blended Complementary Foods Using Local Foods**

A Workbook for Resilience Food Security Activity Partners

Market Pathway of the *Optimizing Diets by Using Local Foods for Improved* *Nutrition for Women and Children Guide*

Photograph depicts two African American men working on hay cutting machinery in a field. The man to the left is standing on the machine. The man to the right is holding a hay bundle. A man is shown standing behind the machine in front of hay mound looking at them. The machine is labeled 'Danger,' with a 10-digit phone number.


About USAID Advancing Nutrition

USAID Advancing Nutrition is the Agency’s flagship multi-sectoral nutrition project, led by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI), and a diverse group of experienced partners. Launched in September 2018, USAID Advancing Nutrition implements nutrition interventions across sectors and disciplines for USAID and its partners. The project’s multi-sectoral approach draws together global nutrition experience to design, implement, and evaluate programs that address the root causes of malnutrition. Committed to using a systems approach, USAID Advancing Nutrition strives to sustain positive outcomes by building local capacity, supporting behavior change, and strengthening the enabling environment to save lives, improve health, build resilience, increase economic productivity, and advance development.

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Acronyms

AWP acceptability and willingness to pay

BMCT Business Model Calculator Tool

EFB enriched flour-based blend

NGO nongovernmental organization

OLDT Optimizing Local Diets Tool

RFSA Resilience Food Security Activity

SBC social and behavior change

SME small and medium enterprise

TA technical assistance

USAID United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

Kiosk icon.
The United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance funds multi-year non-emergency Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs) in highly vulnerable regions of low-income developing countries. These activities often focus on strengthening resilience and improving food security and nutrition among highly vulnerable populations. RFSAs often emphasize improving women and children’s nutritional status, with a focus on the first 1,000 days from conception to the first two years of life. The first 1,000 days are considered a window of opportunity to reduce child mortality and morbidity, prevent malnutrition, and support optimal child growth and development.

**The Optimizing Diets Guide includes 7 components:**

1. Overview
2. Optimizing Local Diets Tool (OLDT)
3. Instruction Manual for OLDT
4. Household Pathway Workbook
5. **Market Pathway Workbook**
6. Business Model Calculator Tool (BMCT)
7. Instruction Manual for BMCT

RFSAs typically include resource transfers. A key benefit of resource transfers, whether cash, vouchers, or in-kind food assistance, is that they are often intended to support age-appropriate complementary feeding of children 6–23 months of age. However, these transfers are typically for a short duration and not sustainable after a RFSA concludes its activities. To sustain these benefits for this age group in the long-term, RFSAs often look to transition to local alternatives for complementary feeding. One of those options is to use a market-driven approach to develop a locally enriched flour-based blend (EFB) for complementary feeding that can be sold in local markets. The feasibility and viability of this approach is contingent on an enabling environment, such as the existence of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with experience in food processing that may be able to produce a local complementary food blend. This workbook is a part of the *Optimizing Diets by Using Local Foods for Improved Nutrition for Women and Children Guide* (referred to hereafter as the *Optimizing Diets Guide*). To understand how this workbook fits within the framework of the *Optimizing Diets Guide*, review the *Overview* document, which provides important considerations to take into account before using this workbook.

Principles of the Workbook

This workbook is designed for RFSA implementing partners (IPs), specifically to engage a multi-disciplinary team likely led by a private sector engagement advisor or agriculture and livelihoods advisors in partnership with the RFSA nutrition advisors and the private sector SME.[[1]](#footnote-1) It describes a process to determine whether a market-driven approach to the production of enriched blended complementary foods[[2]](#footnote-2) through the engagement of SMEs is operationally feasible, economically viable, and ultimately sustainable.[[3]](#footnote-3) It can guide and coordinate inputs from multiple different technical teams within a RFSA program (e.g., private sector engagement, nutrition, agriculture and livelihoods development, social and behavior change [SBC] teams). The workbook can also be used to document the decision-making process to engage local SMEs in a market-driven approach—or not. It draws on a number of tools that provide more detailed guidance for key steps in the process (e.g., the Optimizing Local Diets Tool [OLDT], which supports Step 3 of this approach) and provides practical templates for additional data collection for other steps in the process. This workbook also uses, refers to, and links with the Business Model Calculator Tool (BMCT) in Step 5. Please note that this workbook is **not** meant to be a complete guide to designing a market systems approach, which is more complex. Additional guidance and frameworks on market systems approaches and private sector engagement are available on the USAID website.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Timing and Time Requirements

A market-driven approach to the production of EFBs should start during the first year of RFSA implementation (i.e., the refine and implement phase) to ensure sufficient time to support the SME to produce, promote, and market an EFB. Starting in the first year of RFSA implementation is critical since it provides time for the SME to develop a record of production while being supported by the RFSA, which should then put the SME in a favorable position to access finance from local institutions and continue to grow after the end of the RFSA. Starting early thus lays a strong foundation for a sustainable exit for the RFSA. Often private sector engagement is left too late in the program implementation cycle, which does not allow for a sustainable exit.

The entire process of developing a market-driven approach using this workbook should take about nine months. This includes a pilot test of the production and marketing of the EFB to ensure that the RFSA team reflects on the complexities of product development, placement, pricing, and promotion—all important components of the marketing strategy. An implementation calendar is provided at the end of this section to help the RFSA team plan all steps along a timeline and indicate progress along the way.

Phased Approach

The process to determine whether to apply a market-driven approach for the production of an EFB through the support of a local SME is designed to be rapid and iterative. Data collection is kept to a minimum and phased—only relevant data are collected at every step in the process, rather than being “front-loaded” with extensive assessments at the start. This enables the RFSA team to understand how the potential business model evolves rather than work off a predetermined model. It also acts as a risk mitigation strategy for the RFSA team, with the investment of time and money to gradually increase as the concept is validated.

Process Outline

Two Stages with 10 Steps

The process described and applied in this workbook is based on a two-stage process, which is further broken into 10 steps. Between Stages A and B there is a go/no-go decision point based on findings from the five steps in Stage A. The RFSA team should plan to complete all steps in Stage A to determine if it is feasible and viable to proceed to Stage B. Although this requires time and resources, the level of investment is still far lower in Stage A than in Stage B. But completing all the steps in Stage A is necessary to determine if the RFSA team in partnership with a local SME can proceed to Stage B. The first stage should take a month or two to complete, while the second stage will require 3–6 months; thus, completing both stages of the process should take about 6–9 months.

|  |
| --- |
| **Stage A: Develop the Business Model** |
| 1. Identify local SMEs  2. Identify similar complementary food products  3. Develop complementary food blends  4. Assess acceptability and willingness to pay  5. Cost the business model |
| **Go or No-Go Considerations** |
| **Stage B: Test the Business Model** |
| 6. Understand your customer  7. Understand your competition  8. Test the new enriched flour-based blend  9. Build the foundational marketing concept  10. Choose a direction: branded or non-branded |

Figure 1. Market-driven Production Process: 2 Stages and 10 Steps

Stage A: Develop the Business Model

Stage A’s five steps are used to determine the break-even point, at which it would become financially viable for the SME to produce an EFB. The first two steps use a rapid data collection approach to identify potential SMEs and similar food products on the local market. In the early stages of determining whether to engage in a market-driven approach, RFSAs must determine whether potential SME partners have the capacity to comply with applicable food safety and quality standards, and ensure that there is an enabling environment for food safety compliance at the national level (e.g., regulatory standards, testing capabilities, and enforcement/oversight mechanisms). Step 3 uses the OLDT to develop and analyze up to four different EFBs, while Step 4 describes the process to assess consumer acceptability of the proposed blend(s) and willingness to pay for such a complementary food product(s). The fifth and final step of this stage uses a BMCT with instructions and helps the team develop a simple annual profit and loss statement for the SME, and calculates the break-even point for the business to produce the EFB(s).

Go/No-Go Considerations

**De-Risking Private Sector Engagements**

The term de-risking in this context means that the RFSA partner can support the SME in various ways that will help reduce the initial financial burden and risk. If the SME has manufactured and marketed the proposed blend for a few years, it should have built up a sufficiently stable market, as well as technical and operational capacity to continue without support.

Building in a moment to review a number of Go/No Go considerations will allow the RFSA team (and the SME) to assess whether it is operationally feasible and economically viable for one or more local SMEs to manufacture an enriched blended complementary food. After completing Stage A and reviewing the operational feasibility and economic viability, if the decision indicates it is both feasible and viable, then the RFSA partner should consider proceeding to Stage B.

Stage B: Test the Business Model

This stage is meant to pilot test the production and marketing of the EFB. It is important to remember that the objective of the second stage is to refine and adapt the business model. As such, the initial idea that was developed in Stage A should not be set in stone, and it is critical that different variations or scenarios are tried and tested. This is an iterative process. De-risking this pilot phase should be considered a key function of the RFSA’s support for the SME and something that resource-constrained local entrepreneurs often struggle to do. The “4Ps of Marketing” concept will be applied in Stage B when the RFSA team will look more closely into aspects of product, place, price, and promotion. [Generating Demand for Healthy Diets: A Guide to Social Marketing in Nutrition](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/generating-demand-healthy-diets-guide-social-marketing-nutrition) can also help with this step.

Implementation Calendar

This calendar will help the RFSA team develop a more detailed timeline for the implementation of the different stages and steps of the market-driven production development process, and make adjustments over time as needed. The “notes” column can be used to indicate who is responsible for the step, hyperlink information that might be useful for others involved in the process, and any other relevant information and inquiries.

| **Stage A** | **Month 1** | **Month 2** | **Month 3** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Step 1: Identify local SMEs** | Not Started |  |  |  |
| **Step 2: Identify similar complementary foods** | Not Started |  |  |  |
| **Step 3: Develop EFBs** | Not Started | Not Started |  |  |
| **Step 4: Assess acceptability and willingness to pay (AWP)** |  |  | Not Started |  |
| **Step 5: Cost the business model** |  |  | Not Started |  |

| **Go/No-Go Considerations** | **Month 4** | **Month 5** | **Month 6** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Go/No-Go Decision** | Not Started |  |  |  |
| **Finance support** |  | Not Started |  |  |
| **Procurement support** |  | Not Started |  |  |
| **Human resource support** |  | Not Started |  |  |

| **Stage B** | **Month 7** | **Month 8** | **Month 9** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Step 6: Understand your customer** | Not Started |  |  |  |
| **Step 7: Understand your competition** | Not Started |  |  |  |
| **Step 8: Test new EFBs** |  | Not Started |  |  |
| **Step 9: Build foundational marketing concept** |  | Not Started | Not Started |  |
| **Step 10: Choose a direction: branded or unbranded** |  |  | Not Started |  |

Considerations for a Market-Driven Approach

This section highlights the potential impact pathways by which the market-driven approach can help a RFSA achieve its intended outcomes. It also outlines a set of key considerations that underpin the market-driven approach that relate to food safety standards, certification and registration, ensuring viability and sustainability, and outlines the types of technical assistance (TA) that may be needed from different stakeholders at each stage of the process to successfully implement this approach.

Potential Impact Pathways

The application of a market-driven approach to the local production of a nutritious food product such as an EFB provides several impact pathways the RFSA partners should consider:

1. Improved nutrition for children under age two through the stable and consistent consumption of EFB products.
2. Increased income for small-holder farmers through the sale of agricultural commodities produced at household level to SMEs.
3. Increased caregiver time and labor-saving due to a readily available nutritious complementary food product.

As with any approach, the risks and potential benefits for the RFSA partner and the SME associated with each of these pathways must be considered. More importantly, these risks are not evenly distributed between the RFSA partner and the SME, and strategies that minimize risks to the RSFA may increase risks to the SME, and vice-versa.

The framework (UNICEF 2021) presented in figure 2 provides a clear overview of the interplay between consumption behaviors, access to income and care practices, and the pathways in which these influence nutrition outcomes.

UNICEF Nutrition Framework depicts interplay among (bottom to top) Enabling determinants, Underlying determinants, Immediate determinants, and Outcomes for children and women on Maternal and Child Nutrition.

Enabling determinants:
Governance (political, financial, social and public and private sector actions.)
Resources (environmental, financial, social and human.)
Norms (positive social and cultural norms and actions.)

Underlying determinants:
Food (age-appropriate, nutrient-rich foods including breast milk in early childhood, safe and palatable drinking water, and household food security.)
Practices (age-appropriate feeding and dietary practices from early childhood, with adequate food preparation, food consumption and hygiene practices.)
Services (adequate nutrition, health, education, sanitation and social protection services, with healthy food environments that support good diets.)

Immediate determinants: Diets (adequate food and dietary practices for children and women). Care (driven by adequate services and practices for children and women.)

Outcomes for children and women: Maternal and Child Nutrition (improved survival, health, physical growth, cognitive development, school readiness and school performance in children and adolescents; improved survival, health, productivity and wages in women and adults; and improved prosperity and cohesion in societies.)


Figure 2. UNICEF Nutrition Framework

1. Improved nutrition for children under age two through the stable and consistent consumption of EFB products

Poorer households, which are likely the most vulnerable to malnutrition and would therefore benefit the most from the consumption of an enriched blended complementary food, might be least able to afford such a product. The “lean season,” a time during which many households are generally most affected by food insecurity and low dietary diversity, coincides with the time of the year when their purchasing power is lowest.

The RFSA effect on nutrition may be limited if households that are most vulnerable to malnutrition are unable to purchase an enriched blended complementary food. At the same time, SMEs whose business model depends on poor households as consumers, who are most vulnerable to malnutrition, also face risk as the consumer demand driven by product affordability and ability to pay might be limited, especially during the lean season.

The following may mitigate some of these risks:

1. **Social protection**. If a functional long-term government-led social protection scheme is in place, it could mitigate these risks, especially if it is based on cash transfers. For example, Ethiopia implements the Productive Safety Net Program to reduce food insecurity and which includes lean season cash transfers.
2. **Short-term cash transfers.** Short-term, ad-hoc cash transfers, such as those implemented by a RFSA or other NGO programs, might mitigate the risk for the RFSA. However, cash transfers potentially increase the long-term risk for the SME. If an SME builds its business model on demand created through program-based cash transfers, there is a real risk that consumer demand will significantly reduce by the end of the program, and the SME may be unable to maintain the volume of sales necessary to remain profitable. If however, RFSA IPs propose three-month lean season transfers (either cash or in-kind food assistance), layering and sequencing a market-driven approach to support households with children under two with enriched blends for purchase for the remaining nine months of a year when households have more income could be a strategy to gradually transition out of resource transfers, and further support their limited use to key moments in the year, while also socializing households to purchase complementary foods.
3. **In-kind distribution**. Similar to cash transfers, the direct procurement of an EFB by a RFSA or NGO program produced by the SME to provide in-kind distribution to vulnerable populations may mitigate the risk of reduced nutrition, but will most likely increase the long-term risk for the SME if there is a significant reduction in the demand at the end of the program if the target population is not ready or able to pay for this product on the local market[[5]](#footnote-5). Also, the distribution of commodity transfers such as corn-soy blends can be a potential barrier to the volume of sales of a local EFB and this can discourage SMEs you engage with from continuing to produce and sell a local EFB. Carefully planning a transition for households receiving commodity transfers to purchasing a local EFB supports the sustainability of a local EFB produced by an SME.

The formative research on nutrition that a RFSA may conduct as part of the program inception will be an important resource for determining whether a market-driven approach is suitable given the determinants of nutrition in the program area. In particular, consider the relative importance of **food, practices, and services** as underlying determinants of malnutrition (see UNICEF conceptual framework above). In contexts where practices and services are more important than food as underlying determinants of malnutrition, there may be less risk associated with pursuing an impact strategy focused on the purchase and consumption of an enriched blended complementary food (Impact Pathway 1). However, in contexts where lack of food is the primary underlying determinant of malnutrition, there may be an increased risk that the option to purchase an enriched blended complementary food for consumption will have limited benefit due to households’ inability to afford the cost of purchasing the complementary food consistently. In the absence of formative research on nutrition, a simple analysis of the seasonality of malnutrition in comparison to the seasonality of food insecurity could indicate some of the potential risks (the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification also produces acute food insecurity and malnutrition snapshots that provide this type of overlaid information for areas of high vulnerability in which RFSAs implement activities).

2. Increased income for small-holder farmers through the sale of agricultural commodities produced at the household level to SMEs

A RFSA program has the opportunity to make a direct and explicit link between the interventions designed to improve crop production and marketing for the farm households it targets and the support for an SME to manufacture an EFB. This can benefit the SME, rural farm households, and the farm-based organizations that these households associate with and that may be supporting crop aggregation, storage, and marketing. A reliable market linked to a local SME ready-to-purchase agricultural commodities needed to manufacture an enriched blended complementary food could give rural households and local farm-based organizations the ability to invest in practices and technologies to increase crop production and productivity, knowing that an increase in production will find a dependable buyer. Note, however, that the SME might need to develop strategies to source all foods (e.g., ingredients) that make up the blend to ensure sufficient stock for year-round reliable and high-quality production.

In addition, poorer households, which may be most vulnerable to malnutrition and could benefit most from increased income through the sale of commodities to the SME, might be least able to increase production to take advantage of the market opportunity. It would be in the interest of the RFSA program to triangulate and facilitate relationships and add a livelihoods and agriculture production component for vulnerable households.

The RFSA program should also ensure that its SBC efforts consider prevailing gender dynamics, which could relate to control over income, production, sales, and intra-household resource allocations. Consider SBC communication on the relation between household income and nutrition outcomes, as increased household income may not be used to buy an enriched blended complementary food for children under two years of age. Such considerations and approaches will mitigate the risk to the RFSA program that increased income for rural households is not spent on the procurement of nutritious foods.

3. Increased caregiver time and labor-saving due to a readily available nutritious complementary food product

Availability on the local market allows women and caregivers to purchase a stable, high-quality, nutrient-rich complementary food for their children. Depending on the most viable business model and the consumer preference and purchasing power, the enriched food might be available in different package sizes. Irrespective of the package size, the EFB will most likely require only the addition of hot water (or milk, if available) for preparation. Ready-to-cook blends provide considerable time and labor saving for a caregiver. Given that mothers are generally the main caregivers for children under the age of two years in rural households, the availability and access to ready-to-cook EFBs allows women to spend time they would otherwise use for gathering ingredients and preparing a nutrient-rich porridge recipe on other things, including child care. In addition, if the primary caregiver of the small child is not around, another household member can easily prepare a high-quality EFB to feed the child. A packaged EFB can also be marketed as a specialized complementary food for children aged 6–23 months, which may also make it easier for mothers and caregivers to justify its purchase to other household members and prepare it separately for small children.

Food Safety, Certification, and Registration Requirements

Certification and registration of foods sold through a market-driven approach on a commercial basis are required. The standards for certification and registration of consumable products and the process involved differ greatly from country to country. It is therefore important for the RFSA partner to work closely with the selected SME to understand the requirements and timeline for the certification/registration process. Often, for food safety and certificate of analysis compliance a major challenge by producers is having access to reliable country analytical and reference labs. Thus looking into the existence of these capabilities early will save potential issues with compliance. As the SME is identified and the EFB is selected, start this process in Step 1 to have a sound understanding by the start of Stage B.

|  |
| --- |
| **The Importance of Food Safety**   * **Foodborne illnesses contribute to malnutrition.** Contaminated foods perpetuate cycles of disease and malnutrition that are particularly harmful to vulnerable populations, including infants, young children, the elderly, and the sick. * **Foodborne illnesses can have life-long negative effects.** Inadequate nutrition and repeated bouts of infection during the first 1,000 days affects approximately 162 million children under the age of five and can permanently affect their cognitive and physical development. * **Foodborne illnesses are preventable.** Foodborne illnesses can be reduced, managed, and mitigated by safe handling of food on farms, during transport, throughout processing, in markets, and in the home. * **Food safety removes barriers to economic growth by enabling trade and food mobilization.** Food safety policies and practices enable food producers and processors to reach new local and global markets that adhere to international food safety standards.   Source: Feed the Future Food Safety Innovation Lab  <https://ag.purdue.edu/food-safety-innovation-lab/about-us/why-food-safety/> |

Depending on local standards and requirements, this process might involve laboratory testing and analysis of the blend, which could include shelf-life testing and food safety measures, and an institutional audit of the manufacturing SME.

In addition to country-specific requirements, USAID requires all IPs to apply the[Agricultural Commodity Eligibility and Requirements Relating to Quality and Safety](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/312mac.pdf). In the absence of country-specific requirements, we strongly recommend that partners review and apply the [Codex Alimentarius](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Codex_Alimentarius/rYFEcIZzzm0C?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover), a collection of internationally recognized standards, codes of practice, guidelines, and other recommendations published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations relating to food and its production, labeling, and safety.

Ensuring Viability and Sustainability: Don’t Start at the Finish

Ensuring a reliable market and consumer demand base are key considerations for RFSA partners when engaging SMEs in a market-driven approach to locally produce EFBs. This not only ensures a sustainable exit strategy for the RFSA program, but will ensure long-term commercial viability for the SME partner as well. Now that we have seen that a number of impact pathways are associated with a market-driven production of an EFB (and how this ultimately benefits poorer households that are most vulnerable to malnutrition), consider that the starting point for a RFSA program might look very different from the ultimate goal.

The ultimate goal may be that poorer rural households purchase nutritious foods, such as the blended flour, particularly during the lean season, to safeguard their children’s nutritional needs. However, **the starting point for a market-driven approach has to be for the SME to engage in the manufacturing and marketing of a profitable product.** This in turn might mean that the SME starts by targeting wealthier urban and peri-urban consumers, who are a more reliable market because a guaranteed or more dependable demand from these consumers will enable the SME to produce the minimum quantity of a blended flour needed to reach the break-even point and make a healthy profit margin. Once the SME has the stable foundation provided by a reliable ‘better off’ households, it will likely be more feasible to expand into other (less reliable) markets targeting poorer households.

**Importance of the Break-Even Point**

The break-even point is the point at which total cost and total revenue are equal, meaning there is no loss or gain for your small business. In other words, you have reached the level of production at which the costs of production equal the revenues for a product.

Consider the alternative, in which an SME starts at the finish. In this scenario, the SME starts by targeting poorer rural households. However, with limited or significant seasonal variation in demand and low purchasing power, the SME might struggle to break even. In addition, when the RFSA support is eventually and inevitably withdrawn, the SME may struggle to remain operational.

Documenting Local Knowledge and Coordinating Technical Support

This workbook can be a resource for documenting local knowledge and decision-making processes as well as coordinating technical support from a range of specialists, available both within the RSFA team and externally. Each step outlined in this workbook will typically include a table to summarize results. Because a diverse range of technical TA is needed to support a market-driven approach to local EFB production, documenting data, considerations, decisions, and the decision-making process at each step enables an understanding of where, when, and how each type of TA fits in the broader process. Table 1 provides an overview of typical TA requirements throughout the development and implementation of a market-driven process.

Table 1. Steps and Types of TA Required

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Step** | **TA Type** |
| Step 1: Shortlist existing SME | Private sector engagement |
| Step 2: Identify similar complementary foods | *None* |
| Step 3: Develop enriched flour-based blends | Nutrition, agriculture, and livelihoods expertise |
| Step 4: Assess AWP | SBC specialist |
| Step 5: Cost the business model | Private sector engagement |
| Go/No-Go considerations | Private sector engagement, nutrition, agriculture and livelihoods, SBC |
| Senior management, finance, human resources, and procurement |
| Step 6: Understand your customer | SBC specialist |
| Step 7: Understand your competition | *None* |
| Step 8: Test new enriched flour-based blends | Private sector engagement |
| Steps 9 & 10: Build foundational marketing concept, and choose a direction | SBC specialist, private sector engagement |

Stage A: Develop the Business Model

**Why work with established enterprises?**

Established entrepreneurs are those that are already purchasing commodities (e.g., raw ingredients, food crops), processing and packaging them into a new product, and selling to retailers or directly to consumers. Service providers (e.g., a hammer mill or oil press operator) or aggregators are not normally considered in the context of this activity because they have limited experience in packaging, producing and marketing a final product that can be certified and adheres to quality standards.

Stage A includes five steps that are used to determine the break-even point at which it would become financially viable for the SME to produce an EFB. *Stage one should take about one month to complete.*

Step 1. Identify Local SMEs and Assess Their Knowledge and Expertise with Food Safety Standards, Certification, and Registration

The first step in the process is to identify local SMEs that are operational and manufacturing food products and determine if they have the interest and capacity to produce enriched blended complementary foods, and whether they have the knowledge and expertise to produce foods that meet national food safety standards and certify and register these food products. At this stage, the RFSA should assess the support that the program would need to enable the SME to produce and market the food.

The goal of Step 1 is to **develop a short list of SMEs that have the *potential* to produce proposed EFBs** and the *interest* in spending time developing a business model to complete stage I of this process. In this context, an SME that has the potential to produce a proposed EFB should also have some past experience, knowledge, and expertise in producing food products that meet national food safety standards, through certification and registration. At this point, it is not necessary to select one SME; it is feasible to develop business models for a small number of SMEs. If multiple SMEs are under review, the selection of which to work with will happen as part of the Go/No-Go considerations before Stage B.

Key Functions of Step 1

1. **Informs the Go/No-Go considerations at the end of stage I**

Developing, producing, and marketing a new product is a significant undertaking. Success and sustainability are much more likely if the RFSA is working with an established enterprise that has experience in managing food production and processing. **Provides inputs for the operational costs used in Step 5**

An established business will have an understanding of the operational costs associated with its existing products (e.g., staff, buildings, vehicles, equipment), even if it lacks formal accounts. This understanding will inform key components of the business model that is developed and costed in Step 5.

1. **Informs the potential scale of operations**

In addition to providing an understanding of operational costs, working with an established enterprise can provide some guidance on the scale of EFB production that might be feasible for the enterprise to manage.

Time Required

Step 1 should take one or two weeks to complete, though this may vary depending on the number of SMEs in the RFSA program area. Each SME interview should take about an hour to complete, so it should be possible to interview four SMEs in one day, if they are in the same location.

Tasks

The four tasks to complete include:

1. Develop a long list of SMEs that are operational and manufacturing food products:
   1. Start with those that are producing/processing local foods.[[6]](#footnote-6) Use key informant interviews to identify those that may not be already processing local foods.
2. Use the data collection tool in annex I to interview each SME on the list to determine:
   1. The number of products it currently manufactures.
   2. The type of products it currently manufactures.
   3. Total monthly turn-over for the SME as a whole (either in kg or in monetary value).
3. Classify SMEs according to type and size of enterprise:
   1. Type
      1. Food manufacturer: An SME that is purchasing, processing, and packaging commodities into a new product and selling it to retailers or directly to consumers. It has skills and experience associated with the key processes needed to manufacture an enriched blended complementary food.
      2. Miller/processors: Service providers that are processing raw commodities but not packaging them into a new product and selling them. Miller/processors may have limited experience in promotion and marketing and limited access to working capital or experience with financial management because they are primarily service providers.
      3. Agricultural cooperative: A cooperative[[7]](#footnote-7) may be involved in the aggregation and storage of agricultural commodities produced by its members. It may also be involved in processing as a service to its members or others in the community. If the cooperative is processing, packing, and selling foods to retailers or directly to consumers, it can be classified as a “food manufacturer.” Agricultural cooperatives may have limited experience in the promotion and marketing of food products and limited access to working capital or experience with financial management since they often source commodities in-kind from their members.
      4. Trader/aggregator: An SME that is currently purchasing but not processing commodities into a new product. Traders/aggregators are likely to have significant experience with financial management and access to working capital but may have more limited experience in food product promotion and marketing. They are likely to need financial resources to invest in capital equipment for processing.
   2. Size:[[8]](#footnote-8)
      1. Micro: 1–9 staff. Often informal.
      2. Small: 10–49. May be formally registered as a business but with few formal systems (e.g., accounts) in place and limited access to finance.
      3. Medium: 50–249. Formally registered as a business with formal systems and accounts in place and some access to finance.
      4. Large: more than 250 staff. Formal business systems, robust governance, and access to formal financial institutions.
4. Select a short list of SMEs that the RFSA program will work with over the next three months to develop a business model (i.e., complete Stage A). Review type, size, and interest in engaging:
   1. Type: it is assumed that an existing food manufacturer is the best choice but other options are possible (e.g., cooperative, miller, aggregator). Drop-down menu choices in table 1 below are color coded.
   2. Size: it is assumed that small and medium enterprises are the best choice but other options are possible. It is likely difficult for a micro enterprise to scale-up to reach the volumes required to break even and achieve desired scale of impact. On the other hand, large enterprises may not require RFSA support to produce and market enriched blended food products, or the targeted consumer based in rural localities are not of interest to them. Drop-down menu choices in table 1 below are color coded.
   3. Interest: this can be a critical factor! An SME that is interested and motivated to produce and market EFBs can overcome many potential barriers.
5. Select 1–3 SMEs that the RFSA will consider supporting to produce and market an EFB. Drop-down menu choices in table 2 below are color coded to facilitate review and selection.

Summary of Potential SMEs

**Table 2. Long List of all Operational Food and Agriculture SME**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **SME Name** | **Type of Enterprise** | **Size of Enterprise** | **Interest** | **Short-listed** |
| 1 | *NutriFoods* | Food Manufacturer | Medium | High | Yes |
| 2 | insert name | Agricultural Co-operative | Micro | High | Yes |
| 3 | insert name | Agricultural Co-operative | Micro | High | Yes |
| 4 | insert name | Agricultural Co-operative | Micro | High | Yes |
| 5 | insert name | Agricultural Co-operative | Micro | High | Yes |
| 6 | insert name | Agricultural Co-operative | Micro | High | Yes |

**Note:** This table includes active drop-down menus

**How to Use This Information**

The short list of SMEs developed in Step 1 identifies *potential* partners that the RFSA could work with to support market-driven production of EFBs. This short list will be refined and a final decision made on which SME to work with at the Go/No Go stage after all five steps in Stage A are completed. At the Go/No Go stage, you will review whether the blends developed in the OLDT are acceptable to local consumers and whether it is economically viable for a local SME to produce and sell them. If all criteria are met, the support requirements of the SME short-listed in this step will be explored further and a final decision made on which to support.

Step 2. Identify Similar Complementary Food Products

The second step uses a rapid data collection process to identify fortified or enriched flour products that are already on the market. This information is used to provide an *initial estimate* of the market price for EFB to eventually manufacture and market.

Data collection at this step is not designed to be comprehensive. More comprehensive data on the local market for enriched blended complementary foods will be collected in Step 7, ***if*** the Go/No Go stage determines it is viable to proceed with market-driven production by local SMEs. The *initial estimate* of the market price that is identified in this step provides a key input into the development of the business model and the profit and loss statement, which will be further reviewed and calculated in Step 5.

**If similar products are not available the RFSA should seriously consider focusing on household food-based approaches to the production of nutrient-rich diets.**

*A workbook to support RFSA IPs to develop household-level approaches to the production of nutrient-rich diets can be accessed from* <https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/household-food-based-approach-local-complementary-foods-workbook>*.*

Key Functions of Step 2

1. **Informs the Go/No Go decision at the end of Stage A**

The availability of similar products on the market greatly facilitates the process of determining market demand, making it possible to develop an estimate of prices and volumes through a rapid data collection process. When similar products are not on the market, developing an estimate for product prices and volumes requires significant time and resources.

1. **Provides inputs for the unit pricings used in costing the business model**

The availability of similar products provides reliable data points for one of the most important inputs to the business model that is developed in Step 5: unit prices. Unit prices are critical for determining revenue and the volume of sales needed for the business to break even.

1. **Informs the promotion and marketing strategy**

The marketing efforts of existing products can help differentiate the EFB produced by the SME, which is addressed in Stage B of the process.

Time Required

Step 2 should take no more than two hours.

Tasks

The following six tasks will need to be completed:

1. Visit a local retailer (informal market, small retailer, or supermarket)
2. Count the number of fortified or enriched blended foods that are available for sale
   1. If no products are available, note this in the data collection form and summary tables (below).
3. List product names and average retail prices.
4. Ask the shopkeeper which products are most popular with customers, and rank them (1 being the most popular).
5. Buy one packet of the fortified blended flour (starting with the most popular one) and note the price.
6. Repeat the process, visiting 3–5 local retailers buying a *different* fortified or enriched blended flour in each shop. To buy a blended flour that is different from the one you already purchased with another local retailer, you might have to buy the second, third, and fourth most popular one.

**Why should we buy a sample of the product?**

We suggest that you buy a sample of existing products enable the SME to obtain all the details on the different ingredients that make up the food product or blend. This is meant to ensure that exact and correct data gathered, and small benefit to the retailer in return for the information she might have provided.

Data collection forms are available in **annex 2;** results will be summarized in table 3 below.

Summary of Local Availability of Complementary Foods

Table 3. Summary of Local Availability of Similar Products

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Product Name** | **Manufacturer/SME Size** | **Popularity** | **Estimated Sales** (kg/week) | **Average Price/kg** |
| 1 | insert name | Micro | High |  |  |
| 2 | insert name | Micro | High |  |  |
| 3 | insert name | Micro | High |  |  |
| 4 | insert name | Micro | High |  |  |
| 5 | insert name | Micro | High |  |  |

**Note:** This table includes active drop-down menus.

**How to Use This Information**

* Calculate the average sales (kg/week) across the 3–5 products. This will be used in Stage B to determine the number of retailers in the promotion and marketing strategy.
* Calculate the average price/kg across the 3–5 products. This will be used as an input in the costing of the business model in Step 5.

Step 3. Develop Enriched Flour-based Blends

The third step requires composing and analyzing formulations of EFB options. The OLDT allows the user to compose up to four different flour blends, using different locally available foods (e.g., ingredients that make up the blend). Refer to the [Food Environment Assessment Package](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/spotlight/food-systems) for additional help with this step. This step is designed to ensure that the EFB to be manufactured by the SME is meeting the nutritional requirements of and appeals to intended consumers (e.g., children aged 6–23 months). Once the blends for consideration are composed using this tool, users will test consumer acceptability of the blend in Step 4.

Key Functions of Step 3

* **Determines a key list of potential foods to be used in EFB**s, and short-list these foods based on local contextual considerations (e.g., consumer desirability, cultural appropriateness, climate resilience, input requirements, ease of production and processing).
* **Creates up to four unique EFBs** to meet the nutritional needs of the target population.

Time Required

Step 3 should take no more than two days, assuming a multi-sectoral team can review the sustainability considerations for each of the proposed ingredients that make up the EFBs.

Tasks

**Important: The tasks described in Step 3 require the use of the OLDT *(***<https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/optimizing-local-diets-tool>***).*** Comprehensive instructions and the Nutrition Composition Calculator spreadsheet (Tab 3b in the OLDT) are an integral component of the OLDT. The user must complete the application of this tool and calculations before starting Step 5.

The following four tasks will need to be completed:

1. Identify local foods and add them to the key foods list of ingredients for the composition of an EFB (Tab 2 in the OLDT). Note that the option to target the specific population of children 6–23 months should be selected here.
2. Short-list up to 10 foods for use in the Nutrition Composition Calculator (Tab 3b in the OLDT).
3. Locate the nearest food composition data for each shortlisted ingredient, and add it to the Nutrition Composition Calculator (Step 4 in the OLDT).
4. Iterate EFB formulations to produce a nutrient-rich blend that meets the population’s unique nutritional needs

Summary of EFBs

**Important**: Data for table 4 below should be copied from Tab 3B of the OLDT based on the blends you composed. Ensure that each food (e.g., ingredient) is listed where it indicates [insert foods], followed by the proposed volume (in grams) for each food per blend, based on the number of blends (up to 4) that you composed.

Table 4. Enriched Flour-based Blend Options

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Product Name** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| Blend Name | | [blend] | [blend] | [blend] | [blend] |
| [insert preparation method] | |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | [insert food] |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | [insert food] |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | [insert food] |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | [insert food] |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | [insert food] |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | [insert food] |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | [insert food] |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | [insert food] |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | [insert food] |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | [insert food] |  |  |  |  |
| + | Added sugar (g) |  |  |  |  |
| + | Added salt (g) |  |  |  |  |
| + | Vitamin mix |  |  |  |  |
| **Total blend weight [in gr.]** | |  |  |  |  |
| *Average serving size for target population (CU2)* | | *50–140 grams/serving\** | | | |

\* 50–140 grams/serving is the range for one meal (serving) children aged 6–23 months; adjust depending on the child’s actual age. Further guidance on this is provided in the OLDT.

**How to Use This Information**

The composition of the four EFBs developed in this step will be used as inputs for the AWP assessment among potential consumers, caregivers, and buyers. In addition, the specific makeup of the selected EFBs will be used to develop and cost the business model in Step 5.

Step 4. Assess Acceptability and Willingness to Pay

Consumer Testing of Composed EFBs

After selecting up to four EFBs through the application of the OLDT, the AWP assessment enables you to select consumers’ preferred blend(s) (based on taste, smell, color, and texture, etc.) and get an indication of their willingness to pay for the product on the local market. Their willingness and ability to pay will be an important factor in the eventual product costing and price setting.

**The AWP assessment guide and instructions consist of the following materials available for RFSA partners (annex 3):**

* Protocol template

* Focus group discussion guide for mothers
* Focus group discussion guide for fathers

The market-driven approach is an iterative process, and the proposed blends may need to be adjusted based on the AWP assessment, the costing of the blend to be developed in Step 5, and the promotion and marketing strategy developed in Stage B of the process.

The AWP assessment will aim to fill some remaining data gaps in background information, for example:

* Development of consumer profiles for each product.
* Data on household decision-making about food and non-food expenditures in the implementation area.
* Food beliefs, practices related to age, gender, pregnant and lactating women and health status (e.g., complementary feeding and feeding during and after illness) in the implementation area.
* Community members’ perceptions about current RFSA in-kind rations, where applicable.
* Family decision-making about rations or sharing of rations, inside and outside the household.

Key Functions of Step 4

The AWP assessment aims to answer two questions:

1. **What products are acceptable** in terms of taste, smell, texture, color, desirability, and convenience?
2. **What is the stated willingness to pay and affordability** for an enriched blended flour?

**Important:** This step requires the production of the proposed EFBs for the AWP assessment among target populations. Based on the population sample size for AWP assessment, the SME(s) should manufacture a batch of each EFB that is large enough to be assessed.

The methodology used for the assessment is based on focus group discussions with mothers, fathers, and caregivers using a semi-structured discussion guide. Each discussion will include 8–12 participants. During the focus group discussion, the data collection team will demonstrate the preparation of the EFB being tested, and serve each participant a small amount of the product in separate small containers with individual utensils. After participants have tasted the product, the data collectors will ask the questions in the discussion guide, related to:

1. Perceptions of enriched food products generally and the specific product being tested desirability, healthfulness, affordability, and convenience.
2. Sensory testing of one of the two products, in which participants will sample the product and then answer questions about its look, smell, taste, and texture.
3. Stated willingness to pay for the product being tested.
4. Household decision-making about diets of children 6–23 months old.
5. Household decision-making about food acquisition and purchasing.

Summary of Acceptability and Willingness to Pay

The following table will allow the assessment team to record the findings of the AWP assessment in a summarized format, and rank the EFBs in order of preference (1 being most favored; 4 least favored).

### **Table 5. Summary of Acceptability and Willingness to Pay**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Flavor** | **Appearance** | **Texture** | **Rank** |
| **EFB 1** | Good | Good | Good | 1 |
| **EFB 2** | Good | Good | Good | 1 |
| **EFB 3** | Good | Good | Good | 1 |
| **EFB 4** | Good | Good | Good | 1 |

**Note:** This table includes active drop-down menus.

**How to Use this Information**

The ranking produced by the AWP is a key factor in selecting which blend should be manufactured, but you will also need to consider the cost of the different blends, which you will develop in the next step. The AWP may reveal that one blend is much preferred to others, or that there is relatively little difference between two or more blends. In contexts where blends have a similar preference, cost may be a key factor in determining which to manufacture. If participants much prefer one blend, and the cost analysis in Step 5 shows it is too expensive, it may be possible to review and adjust the most expensive ingredients in that blend. This would require the team to revisit the application of the Nutrition Composition Calculator in the OLDT to ensure that the nutritional requirement for the intended target population is considered and reviewed when making adjustments.

Step 5. Costing the Business Model

The fifth step involves developing a costed business plan that identifies the break-even point the SME must achieve to become profitable. The business modeling, planning, and projection process uses a series of scenarios that analyze the effect of changes in sales prices and volumes on the bottom-line product profitability.

Key Function of Step 5

Step 5 has one primary function, which is to **determine the volume of sales needed for the business to break even**. This step is required to ensure that the SME generates a ‘healthy’ profit margin and is commercially viable. Business profitability and commercial viability are essential for the RFSA to consider given the sustainability requirements for program investments, and the need to have a built-in exit strategy.

**What is a “healthy” profit margin?**

When developing the business model it is useful to think about what a healthy profit margin would be for the SME. The SME needs to make enough profit to ensure that it can continue to operate and, ideally, grow. At the same time it should not make so much profit that it makes the EFB unaffordable for poorer households. In this Market Pathway Workbook and the BMCT, a healthy profit margin is 15–30%

Time Required

Step 5 should take approximately two days over a period of two weeks; one day to produce the initial draft in the business model calculator (BMCT), and one to review and refine the business model.

Tasks

**Important: Please note that the tasks described in Step 5 require the use of the BMCT *(***<https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/market-driven-production-local-complementary-food-blends-tool-and-workbook>***).*** Comprehensive instructions on the use and application of the BMCT are available and hyperlinked in the first tab of the tool.

1. Copy and paste the EFB ingredients and quantities from the Nutrition Composition Calculator (Tab 3b in the OLDT) and enter the price of commodities. The BMCT will calculate the cost of up to four different blends and identify the cheapest.
2. Enter data on the key business operations including revenue, cost of goods, operating costs, and capital equipment.
3. Review the initial profit and loss statement (also known as a P&L statement) and enter key data into table 6 below.
4. Generate scenarios for unit sales price that generate a healthy profit and enter key data into table 7 below.
5. Generate scenarios for sales volume that generate a healthy profit and enter key data into table 8 below.
6. Combine unit sales price and sales volumes scenarios to generate an adjusted profit and loss statement and enter key data into table 9 below.
7. Review the effects of maximum and minimum commodity prices and enter key data into table 9 below.

Summary of the Business Model

Table 6. Illustrative Example of Initial Business Model Profit and Loss Statement, in USD (Step 2 in the BMCT)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **EFB 1** | **EFB 2** | **EFB 3** | **EFB 4** |
| **AWP Rank** | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Revenue | 1,800,000 | 1,800,000 | 1,800,000 |  |
| Cost of goods sold | 1,109,976 | 820,037 | 1,110,448 |  |
| Operating costs | 470,995 | 470,995 | 470,995 |  |
| Capital Equipment | 0 | 0 | 0 |  |
| **Net profit margin** | **219,029** | **508,968** | **218,557** |  |
|  | 12% | 28% | 12% |  |

Table 7. Illustrative Example of Unit Sales Price Scenarios, in USD (Step 3 in the BMCT)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **EFB 2** | Scenario 1 | Scenario 2 | Scenario 3 | Scenario 4 | Scenario 5 |
| **Unit sales price** | **700** | **650** | **600** | **550** | **500** |
| Revenue | 1,680,000 | 1,560,000 | 1,440,000 | 1,320,000 | 1,200,000 |
| Cost of goods sold | 820,037 | 820,037 | 820,037 | 820,037 | 820,037 |
| Operating costs | 470,995 | 470,995 | 470,995 | 470,995 | 470,995 |
| Capital equipment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Net profit margin** | 388,968 | 268,968 | 148,968 | 28,968 | -91,032 |
| 23% | 17% | 10% | 2% | -8% |

Table 8. Illustrative Example of Sales Volume Scenarios, in USD (Step 4 in the BMCT)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **EFB 2** | Scenario 1 | Scenario 2 | Scenario 3 | Scenario 4 | Scenario 5 |
| **Sales volume** | **2,900** | **3,400** | **3,900** | **4,400** | **4,900** |
| Revenue | 2,175,000 | 2,550,000 | 2,925,000 | 3,300,000 | 3,675,000 |
| Cost of goods sold | 990,878 | 1,161,719 | 1,332,560 | 1,503,401 | 1,674,242 |
| Operating costs | 470,995 | 470,995 | 470,995 | 470,995 | 470,995 |
| Capital equipment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Net profit margin** | 713,127 | 917,286 | 1,121,445 | 1,325,604 | 1,529,763 |
| 33% | 36% | 38% | 40% | 42% |

Table 9. Adjusted Business Model Profit and Loss, in USD (Step 5 in the BMCT)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **EFB 2** | **P & L** | **Scenario** | **Max** | **Min** |
| **Unit sales price** | **600** | **Scenario 3** |  |  |
| **Sales volume** | **4,400** | **Scenario 4** |  |  |
| Revenue | 2,640,000 |  | 2,640,000 | 2,640,000 |
| Cost of goods sold | 1,503,401 |  | 1,646,153 | 1,285,966 |
| Operating costs | 470,995 |  | 470,995 | 470,995 |
| Capital equipment | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |
| **Net profit margin** | 665,604 |  | 522,851 | 883,039 |
| 25% |  | 20% | 33% |

**How to Use this Information**

* **Table 6** can be used to determine the comparative profitability of different EFBs. In most cases, you can select the most profitable EFB and use it as the basis for developing scenarios and adjusting the profit and loss statement. However, if the differences in net profit are relatively small, it may be useful to consider other factors to help determine which EFB to focus on. These could include:
* Does one of the EFBs have fewer ingredients which might make procurement and manufacturing simpler?
* Did the AWP show that people had a strong preference for one of the EFBs?
* **Table 7** can be used to assess by how much it is possible to reduce the sales price of the EFB while still making a healthy profit. This is important since the lower the price, the more accessible it will be to poorer households that are most at risk of malnutrition.
* **Table 8** shows the minimum sales volume needed for the SME to break even, which can be used to determine how many sales channels (e.g., retailers) will be required.
* **Table 9** combines the analysis for the previous steps in the BMCT process to form a final, adjusted profit and loss statement that can serve as a goal for the SME as it begins to manufacture the selected EFB.

Go/No-Go Considerations

Altogether, the various steps of stage I should take about a month to complete. When they are completed, the RFSA partner should be able to assess whether it is operationally feasible and economically viable for one or more local SMEs to manufacture an EFB for children aged 6–23 months. In this context, assessing operational feasibility also includes assessing whether the SME can meet food safety standards, certification, and registration (this could involve the RFSA providing support and capacity strengthening to achieve this objective).

This assessment is based on the five “Go/No-Go” decision criteria outlined below. If, after considering these, it seems operationally feasible and economically viable for one or more local SME to manufacture an EFB, then RFSA partner should consider proceeding to Stage B. This stage is expected to take 3–6 months.

Decision Criterium 1. Local Presence of SMEs

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Go** | There is at least one operational SME that is operational and manufacturing food products in the program area. |
| **Maybe** | There are service providers (e.g., a hammer mill or oil press) or aggregators that have limited production and marketing experience. |
| **No-Go** | No SME in the program area is manufacturing food products. The program should seriously consider focusing on household approaches to promoting nutritious diets. |

Decision Criterium 2. Local Availability of Similar Enriched Food Products

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Go** | A variety of similar fortified or enriched blended food products is already available on the market, which can provide an indication[[9]](#footnote-9) of potential market demand. |
| **Maybe** | A limited availability of similar fortified or enriched blended food products on the market. |
| **No-Go** | There is no fortified or enriched blended food product on the market. The program should seriously consider applying the household approach for the production of nutritious diets. |

Decision Criterium 3. Nutrition Requirements

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Go** | EFB meets the majority of requirements for nutrients of concern. |
| **Maybe** | EFB meets many requirements for nutrients of concern. |
| **No-Go** | EFB meets few requirements for nutrients of concern. |

Decision Criterium 4. Acceptability and Willingness to Pay

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Go** | At least one EFB is acceptable to local consumers. |
| **Maybe** | At least one EFB is partially acceptable to local consumers. |
| **No-Go** | No EFB is acceptable to local consumers. |

Decision Criterium 5. Price Analysis

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Go** | Unit price from the business model is cheaper than the average price of other products available on the market and the price consumers are willing to pay. |
| **Maybe** | Unit price from the business model is similar to the average price of other products available on the market and the price consumers are willing to pay. |
| **No-Go** | Unit price from the business model is more expensive than the average price of other products currently available on the market and the price consumers are willing to pay. |

**Summary of Go/No-Go Criteria**

Based on the answers to the statements/questions for each of the five decision criteria above, fill in table 10 below by using the drop-down menu for each criterium and the Go, Maybe, or No-Go decision you considered.

Table 10. Illustrative Example of Summary of Go/No-Go Decision Criteria

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Decision Criteria** | **Go/No-Go Criteria** | **Go/No Go Decision** |
| 1. Presence of SMEs | There is one SME in the program area: NutriFoods | Go |
| 1. Availability of similar products | There are a variety of other EFB available on the market [insert name] | Go |
| 1. Nutrition requirements | EFB’s meet majority of requirements for key nutrients of concern | Go |
| 1. AWP | At least one EFB is acceptable to local consumers | Go |
| 1. Price analysis | Unit price is cheaper than other products: CFA 600 vs CFA 1,000 | Go |
| **FINAL DECISION** |  | **Go** |

**Note:** This table includes active drop-down menus.

The five Go/No-Go criteria should be given equal weight and considered in combination, and are suggested to guide the decisions rather than hard and rigid rules. Use your best judgment and solicit input from a range of technical experts and managers from within the RFSA program.

If the majority of the criteria are “Go” and/or “Maybe,” then the final decision is likely to be “Go.” If there is more than one “No-Go,” there will need to be a strong justification for proceeding to the next stage.

If it is decided that it is inappropriate to continue, consider these approaches:

* Apply a household approach for the production of nutritious foods.
* Collaborate with larger food manufacturers.
* Increase investments in household income-generating activities.

**How to Use This Information**

If, after having reviewed the five Go/No-Go decision criteria, you decide to “Go,” you will need to review the TA support requirements of the SMEs that were short-listed in Step 1 and decide which the RFSA should support.

Conduct key informant interviews with the short-listed SMEs to understand their current operations and areas of support required to enable them to start local EFB production. Use table 11 to summarize interview results. You will then need to decide which SME to support. Be sure to involve RFSA senior management, finance, human resources, and procurement staff in the decision-making process because SME support may require:

* Allocating budget to purchase equipment.
* Hiring staff to support the SME.
* Additional TA.
* Designing activities that link technical program components.

Table 11. Illustrative Example of Short List of SMEs and Support Required

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SME Name** | **Financial Investment** | **Business Development** | **Nutrition** | **Marketing** |
| NutriFoods | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| [enter SME name] | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| [enter SME name] | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

**Note:** This table includes active drop-down menus.

Stage B. Test the Business Model

Stage B involves five steps (6–10) to develop a promotion and marketing strategy for the SMEs selected to produce the chosen EFB. **At the start of Stage B also plan to train the identified SMEs on the national food standard guidelines and regulations.** Refer to[Generating Demand for Healthy Diets: A Guide to Social Marketing in Nutrition](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/generating-demand-healthy-diets-guide-social-marketing-nutrition) for additional help with this stage.

Step 6. Understand Your Customer

Step 6 in Stage B helps you understand potential customers for the enriched blended complementary foods. Consider that there may be more than one customer, and that the RFSA beneficiaries may not be the only or even the primary customer. Having different customers can be a strength because it can provide stability and resilience by ensuring that the SME can maintain profitability and therefore continue to produce the EFB. A focus only on the RSFA beneficiary may lead to a low demand, which could ultimately undermine the viability of the business. It is also important to differentiate between the customer who purchases the product and the beneficiary who uses or consumes the product, since they may not be the same.

Key Function of Step 6

**The starting point** is to understand the RFSA beneficiary, who we can consider to be the *primary customer*. The **next priority** should be to understand the people who buy complementary foods that are currently available on the market. We can consider them as *secondary customers*. You may also need to develop a profile for other customers based on new market segments you develop.

Time Required

Step 6 should take two months to complete.

Tasks

### The key tasks under this particular step require you to interact with potential customers who would purchase and consume the selected EFB (i.e., the primary and secondary customers).

Define the Customer

People's nutrition-related behaviors are complex. Behavior is influenced by many factors, not just knowledge. These include access to affordable and convenient foods, cultural norms that guide what we are expected to eat or not eat, and which foods our family members prefer (Michie 2011). To generate demand for healthy diets, you must identify the specific behaviors for your program context that will make a difference in nutrition and that people are able to do. Once you determine these, you can specify the most appropriate person to practice that behavior.

At the core of any effective marketing campaign are the specific behaviors the marketer wants someone to practice and the group of people who should practice them. Therefore, the two most critical and interlinked first steps to generate demand for healthy diets are–

* defining or refining behavior
* understanding the people who should practice it.

Define the Behavior

A good marketing campaign will have a clearly stated purpose, written as a **behavior**. A behavior is a specific action that a person/group of people practice at a certain time. Often, the desired behavior is to procure or use a particular product. It can also be to engage in a particular practice. An example of a behavior is: ***Caregivers purchase fortified flour blends for their children.***

In most cases, behaviors need to be specific so that the marketing campaign is designed and carefully implemented to meet the unique needs of the people who will be inspired by the campaign to change their behavior. The behavior above may be refined by determining the specific caregivers who need to purchase fortified flour blends, the name or type of flour blend, and the age of their children. You could also indicate a time period or frequency if that is important for the behavior. Here is an illustrative behavior for a fictitious flour blend: fathers purchase one package of Super Flour for their children who are 6–23 months old.

Describe the Audience

Now that you have defined and specified the desired behavior, you need to ensure that you truly understand the audience. A good starting point is to identify socio-demographic characteristics, such as education, religion, and wealth quintile, of the person who you want to practice the behavior. However, this information alone will not help you motivate or compel audiences to adopt a behavior. Nor will it tell you what might make it easier or more difficult for someone to practice the desired behavior. Consider the following questions:

* What does the primary audience (mothers, fathers, and caregivers) do now instead of purchasing or using the food items being promoted?
* What would compel them to change? Identify the factors that make it easier or more difficult to purchase the product being promoted.
* What do they see as the risks and benefits of change? Identify factors that would inspire the audience to think and feel differently about the product being promoted.
* Do you need to break the primary audience into segments (e.g., breastfed vs. non breastfed children under two) to better understand it?

**Summary of Key Customer Profiles**

Table 12. Illustrative Example of Key Customer Profiles

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Characteristic** | **Primary (RFSA beneficiary)** | **Secondary (existing)** |
| 1. **Age and gender** | 25 years and female | 30 years and female |
| 2. **Wealth group** | Poor | Middle income and better-off |
| 3. **Location** | Rural | Urban |
| 4. **Retail channel and frequency of purchase** | Mothers’ network  and  weekly | Large formal retail  and  monthly |
| 5. **Existing customer** | No | Yes |
| 6. **Other preferences indicated** | Saves time | Prefers local ingredients |
| Supporting actor: **Who buys and finances the EFB** | Buys: primary customer | Buys: primary customer |
| Finances: primary customer | Finances: primary customer |
| **Total sales volume (kg)** | 1,100 | 3,300 |
| **Total sales volume (%)** | 25 | 75 |

**How to Use This Information**

The customer profiles developed in this step will be used during the product testing in Step 8. At that stage, the new products will be monitored by the selected SME in terms of the volume of sales that they generate. In addition, the SME will be monitoring whether the *actual* customers who purchase the product align with the *intended* customers described in this step. If the intended customers are not purchasing the product, it will be necessary to repeat Step 8 with a new product that has different characteristics (e.g., place, price, product) to better reach the intended customer (i.e., testing a different combination of place, price & product).

Step 7. Understand Your Competition

This step is used to develop an understanding of other complementary foods that are available on the market and to identify potential gaps in the market that these existing products are not filling. This could include products that directly target RFSA beneficiaries, but may include products that target different customers. In Step 2, we focused on collecting price data for 3–5 products that were available from local retailers (in one location). This rapid data collection was used to provide an initial guide for Costing the Business Model in Step 5.

Key Function of Step 7

In Step 7, we need data on **product** and **place** as well as **price** to identify gaps in the market, which could represent opportunities to increase the availability of an enriched blended food for a broader group of customers. To collect this additional data, we can use the process we used in Step 2 in a larger number of locations. While Step 2 focuses on formal retailers, in Step 7 we will differentiate between:

* Informal retailers.
* Small formal retailers.
* Large formal retailers.
* National/international institutions (government/UN/NGO).

We will also want to conduct the data collection in different geographic locations that represent the diversity of contexts within the RFSA program area. As such, we want to capture the difference in rural versus urban sales locations, for both large and small sales channels.

Time Required

Step 7 should take two weeks to complete. Data collection for each category of retailer should take half-a-day for a team of two people. A team of four people should therefore be able to collect data from four retail categoriesin one day. Data collection will need to be repeated in different geographic locations that represent the RFSA program area.

Tasks

1. Visit a local retailer (informal market, small retailer, or supermarket).
   1. Count the number of fortified or enriched blended foods available for sale. If no products are available, note this in the data collection form and summary tables (below).
2. List the product names and average prices.
3. Ask the shopkeeper which products are most popular with customers, and rank them (1 being the most popular).
4. Repeat the process, visiting 3–5 local retailers buying a *different* fortified or enriched blended food in each shop.

**How to Use this Information**

It is important to identify gaps in the market that present opportunities for the SME to target a certain geographic location, specific sales channel, or particularly underserved population. The gaps in the market identified at this stage will be used to determine which combination of product size, place, and price the SME should prioritize for product testing. For example, a sales channel opportunity could be for the SME to engage lead mothers supported by the RFSA program to stimulate and promote the community-based sales of a new nutritious product, such as the selected EFB. This provides an interesting income-generating opportunity for the lead mother (through sales on a commission basis), and can target an underserved segment of the population in a rural area that might otherwise be difficult for the SME to reach. While market gaps are highly contextual, they often relate to underserved and hard-to-reach populations or geographies that tend to fall outside the regular distribution channels and for which special last-mile delivery efforts must be developed. The RFSA program likely focuses on ‘market gap’ populations and geographies, and can help the SME develop channels to avail these market opportunities.

**Summary of Key Competitors**

Table 13. Illustrative Example of Key Competitors

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Product** | **Product:**  Size | **Place:**  Channel | **Place:**  Location | **Price:**  CFA/kg |
| **1:** *Name* | 1kg | Large formal retail | Urban | 1,000 |
| **2:** *Name* | 1kg | Large formal retail | Urban | 1,100 |
| **3:** *Name* | 500g | Large formal retail | Urban | 1,000 |
| **4:** *Name* | 1kg | Large formal retail | Urban | 900 |
| **5:** *Name* | 1kg | Large formal retail | Urban | 1,200 |
| **GAP** | Smaller  (100/250g) | Lead mothers’ network | Rural | 600–750 |
| Larger (5kg) | Small formal retail |  |  |

Step 8. Testing the New Enriched Flour-based Blends

Introduction to Product, Place, and Price

Product

**“Place” can be used to describe a number of different factors.**

* Category of retail establishment:
* Informal (local markets, table-top vendors, lead mothers, etc.)
* Small formal (mini-marts, container shops)
* Large formal (supermarkets)
* Wholesalers
* Local (district health centers)
* UN/NGO programs
* Geographic location:
* Rural village
* Small urban centers
* Large urban centers

Because the focus of this market-driven approach is on RSFA IPs that aim to support a local SME to produce EFB for children under two years of age, there are limits on the scope of “product” options to be developed. Developing a marketing strategy for a product is therefore focused on one key factor: **product size.**

Product size has an immediate and direct effect on price and therefore affordability, which will in turn affect the volume of sales. Smaller packaging sizes, a well-established marketing strategy for meeting the needs of poorer “bottom of the pyramid” and customers in emerging markets, are now widely used by all types of businesses from multi-nationals to informal traders (Prahalad and Hart 2002). Tapping into this bottom of the pyramid market has the potential to significantly increase sales, but the degree to which they increase may vary between different markets. It is therefore important to run a small pilot to test the effect of different product sizes in *your* markets.

Because smaller packaging is likely to increase costs, it may be useful to run a scenario in the BMCT (e.g., Step 4 in the BMCT) to model the effect of increased packing costs on the break-even point and bottom-line profitability.

In markets such as small towns and peri-urban areas where customers are slightly wealthier and have more disposable income and greater purchasing power, it may be possible to increase sales by using larger packaging.

Place

Place is focused on testing alternative sales locations to develop new market segments that existing products do not serve. This involves developing a rapid overview of which **sales location existing products are sold in** and **testing alternatives that are currently under-served** to determine which, if any, provide opportunities for growth.

Price

Of all the factors in your promotion and marketing plan, **price might be the most important.**

Key Function of Step 8

It is essential to understand the relationship between prices and sales in your market**.** Modeling different price and sales scenarios using the BMCT in Step 5 is an essential prerequisite. It is especially important that you know the lower price limit for your product—at what price you start making a loss, no matter how much product you sell.

There are limits to how much you can learn from modeling different scenarios in Excel. You must get out and test them in real life. It is only through real-world market testing that you will learn the relationship between prices and sales *in your market.* Step 8 will enable you to understand the dynamics between product, price, and place as a function of your [local] market.

Time Required

Testing new products in Step 8 will be based on one month of sales data from 3–5 vendors. Multiple product tests can be run “in parallel” (i.e., tested at the same time) so that even if you are testing four new products, you should be able to complete Step 8 in one month.

Tasks

1. Determine new products to pilot test.
2. Pilot test new products.
3. Compare revenues and sales.

1. Determine New Products to Pilot Test

* Copy the “Gaps” from the final row of table 13 (in Step 7) and paste into the first row of table 14 below.
* Consider what combination of new product, place, and price should be pilot tested:
* You may choose to focus on just one factor (e.g., selling the same size of product at a lower price).
* In many cases, a combination of product, place, and price may be appropriate (e.g., a smaller product size sold through in a different place [informal market]).
* Consider testing products that target different customer personas and diversify income streams for the SME.

Table 14. Illustrative Example of New Products to Pilot

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Product:**  Size | **Place:**  Channel | **Place:**  Location | **Price:**  CFA/kg |
| **GAP** | Smaller  (100/250g) | Informal retail | Rural | 600–750 |
| Larger (5kg) | Small formal retail |  |  |
| **Test A** | Smaller  (100g) | Lead mothers network | Rural | 600 |
| **Test B** | Smaller  (250g) | Small formal retail | Urban | 750 |
| **Test C** | Regular (1kg) | Small & large formal retail | Urban | 750 |
| **Test D** | Larger  (5 kg) | Large formal retail | Urban | 750 |

2. Pilot Test New Products

During a period of approximately four weeks, pilot test sales of up to three new product sizes selected in the previous task (listed in table 14).

* Engage 3–5 vendors/sales agents.
* Ask vendors to record their daily sales revenue using the form in annex 4.
* Summarize combined sales revenue in table 15 below.
* Visit retailers at least once a week to monitor the profile of the *actual* customers who are purchasing the new products and record if they correspond to the *intended* customer (identified in Step 6).
* Compare totals of the sales revenue for new product sizes with revenue of the current product sizes from the same 3–5 vendors.

3. Compare Revenues and Sales

Having completed the pilot tests for the first three “Ps” (product, place, and price) in Steps 6, 7, and 8, it is useful to compare the results across the three pilots to see if any one of the Ps stands out as having significantly more (or less) impact on sales than the others. Simply compile the results of the revenue data from the three pilots and use table 15 below to compare them.

**Summary of Product Testing**

Table 15. Illustrative Example of Summary of Product Testing

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **TEST A** | **TEST B** | **TEST C** | **TEST D** |
|  | small/rural | small/urban | regular/urban | large/urban |
| Week 1 | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue |
| Week 2 | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue |
| Week 3 | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue |
| Week 4 | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue | enter sales revenue |
| **Total Revenue** | sum sales revenue | sum sales revenue | sum sales revenue | sum sales revenue |
| **Customer Persona** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

**Note:** This table includes active drop-down menus

**How to Use this Information**

Based on the comparison of results outlined in table 15 above, make a final selection of the most appropriate combination of product, place, and price that offers the best opportunity to increase sales and improve the nutritional status of children aged 6–23 months. This combination will be used in the next two steps of this process to develop a detailed product promotion (e.g., the fourth and final “P”) and marketing strategy. Detailed guidance on developing a promotion strategy is available in the [Generating Demand for Healthy Diets: A Guide to Social Marketing in Nutrition](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/generating-demand-healthy-diets-guide-social-marketing-nutrition)*,* developed by USAID Advancing Nutrition. A summary of the guidance is provided in the next section of this report.

Step 9. Build a Foundational Marketing Concept

The marketing concept is the starting point for designing the marketing campaign. Think of the concept as the bare elements of a marketing campaign before it turns into one or more creative vehicles (e.g., ad, poster, radio broadcast, community drama). Regardless of the creative approach you take to communicate your key marketing messages, it will start with a foundation that captures the most salient insights from your formative research, along with a compelling and persuasive benefit to the person practicing the behavior. If doubt about the benefit remains, the concept also includes a reason to believe or social or scientific proof of how other people have already benefited. Finally, the marketing concept articulates a call to action, which can be the behavior that is being promoted or a step to take toward practicing the behavior. This section explains these concepts in more detail and offers examples that may be relevant to your context. Additional guidance and worksheets can be found in the [Generating Demand for Healthy Diets: A Guide to Social Marketing in Nutrition](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/generating-demand-healthy-diets-guide-social-marketing-nutrition).

**Key Definitions**

**Insight:** Revelations drawn from audience research that inspire or motivate people to change their behavior or approach a problem differently. Insights are usually “below the surface” findings and deeper understanding of a topic that elicit responses such as, “Aha!” or “Hmmm, I hadn’t thought of it that way before.”

**Benefit statement:** A sentence the articulates to the person practicing the behavior what they or others around them get in return as a result of

**Reason to:** Social or scientific proof that the benefit statement is true.

**Call to action:** An action that the implementer wants the person practicing the behavior to take. That action can be the behavior itself or it can be a step toward practicing the behavior.

Time Required

Step 9 should take 1–2 months. This process is iterative and encourages the program team to design, test, and improve until the marketing concept is deemed appropriate by technical experts and persuasive by community members.

Tasks

1. Consolidate and strengthen insights.
2. Develop and strengthen benefit statements related to the product.
3. Validate insights and benefit statements in the community and users through pretesting.
4. Strengthen insights and benefit statement using validated information from pretesting.
5. Craft the concept using the insight, benefit statement, reason to believe, and call to action.
6. Test the concept with the community and users and improve accordingly.

Table 16 shows an example of a concept (including insight, benefit statement, reason to believe, and call to action) for a fictitious flour blend called Super Flour. Based on the local context, RFSA partners and the selected SMEs can develop their own concept, using the foundational elements available and as appropriate to design their own marketing concept. Enter the results of the foundational marketing concept you tested based on your EFB in the summary table 17 below.

Table 16. Illustrative Example Concept for Fictitious Flour Blend

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Full concept** | Fathers care deeply about being seen as a responsible spender of household funds, so they purchase only large bags of flour, not knowing that a smaller bag of *Super Flour* gives their young children all the nutrients they need to grow strong. In fact, a little bit of *Super Flour* gives children a lot of super power! Result: 95% of parents who added xx grams of Super Flour to their 6–23 months children’s daily meals noticed an increase in their energy levels and growth. Head to your local market today! |
| **Insight** | Fathers care deeply about being seen as a responsible spender of household funds. |
| **Benefit statement** | A little bit of *Super Flour* gives children a lot of super power! |
| **Reason to believe** | 95% of parents who added 90 grams of Super Flour to their 6–23 months children’s daily meals noticed an increase in their energy levels and growth. |
| **Call to action** | Head to your local market today! |

**Summary of Foundational Marketing Concept**

Table 17. Summary of Foundational Marketing Concept

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Primary customer**  **(RFSA beneficiary)** | **Secondary (existing) customer** |
| **Full concept** |  |  |
| **Insight** |  |  |
| **Benefit statement** |  |  |
| **Reason to believe** |  |  |
| **Call to action** |  |  |

**How to Use this Information**

Use the information gathered in this and the previous steps to build the foundation of a marketing campaign that gets noticed, and is memorable for people who should practice the behavior being promoted. Ensure that you follow the International Code of Marketing Breastmilk Substitutes, and the guidance on ending the inappropriate promotion of foods for infants and young children, with a focus on providing parents with the information to make informed choices with regard to age-appropriate complementary feeding.

Step 10. Choose a Direction: Branded or Unbranded

In the last step, you worked with creative staff and behavior change experts to turn the marketing concept into something more creative, noticeable, memorable, and easily processed by people who see it. Step 10 helps you choose a direction and solidify the steps needed to implement the marketing campaign. You can take a branded or an unbranded approach. While not all marketing campaigns need a brand, successful brands can build trust and loyalty in your product. Use the decision tree in the [Generating Demand for Healthy Diets: A Guide to Social Marketing in Nutrition](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/generating-demand-healthy-diets-guide-social-marketing-nutrition)to determine if your campaign needs a brand.

Time Required

Step 10 should take approximately 2 months to complete, depending on campaign complexity.

Tasks

1. Choose a direction.
2. Monitor and evaluate.

Choose a Direction

You can apply a branded or unbranded marketing and promotion strategy. Each option presents different considerations, which are described in detail in the [Generating Demand for Healthy Diets: A Guide to Social Marketing in Nutrition](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/generating-demand-healthy-diets-guide-social-marketing-nutrition), and summarized below.

##### **Branded strategy:**

* Conduct a brand landscape analysis.
* Build a brand on paper.
* Test the brand with users and improve.
* Launch the brand.
* Continue to work with creative staff and behavior change experts to launch the branded campaign.

##### **Unbranded strategy**:

* Continue to work with creative staff and behavior change experts[[10]](#footnote-10) to launch the campaign.

Monitor and Evaluate

Once your campaign has launched, monitor its progress and rapidly adapt it using the data collected.

Develop Indicators

Monitoring indicators for this activity level can vary significantly. At a minimum, ensure that the activity measures the behavior that the consumer will practice (e.g., number of consumers purchasing the promoted product) and factors/drivers that the marketing campaign is trying to address (e.g., percent of the audience members who believe that the recommended product will improve their child’s health). Before designing new indicators, review existing BHA indicators to see if any can be adapted.

Monitor, Evaluate, and Adapt

Strategically measure your demand-generation efforts, ensuring that at minimum the changes in the behavior(s) and associated factor(s) are being tracked at appropriate intervals. Evaluations may also provide useful data about the quality and effectiveness of your team’s demand-generation efforts. Regardless of how you choose to measure, use the data to strengthen and adapt your program accordingly and disseminate useful findings, as possible. Additional information can be found here:

* [Measuring Social and Behavior Change in Nutrition Programs: A Guide for Evaluators](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/measuring-social-and-behavior-change-nutrition-programs-guide-evaluators" \o "Measuring Social and Behavior Change in Nutrition Programs: A Guide for Evaluators)
* [Evaluating Social and Behavior Change Components of Nutrition Activities: A Design Guide for USAID Staff](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/evaluating-social-and-behavior-change-components-nutrition-activities-design-guide-usaid" \o "Evaluating Social and Behavior Change Components of Nutrition Activities: A Design Guide for USAID Staff)
* [Tools for Designing and Conducting Social and Behavior Change Evaluations](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/tools-designing-and-conducting-social-and-behavior-change-evaluations" \o "Tools for Designing and Conducting Social and Behavior Change Evaluations)

**How to Use this Information**

Use this information to design a branded or unbranded campaign that compels action and builds trust in the food products you are promoting. The data collected in the section will help RFSA IPs manage their marketing campaigns.

References

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Annex 1. Step 1. Data Collection Form

Use this form to collect data on the characteristics of existing local SMEs that are producing food products. You will need one form for each SME. The results should be summarized in table 2 and will be used to shortlist SMEs for eventual selection.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SME name** |  | | |
| **Total number of products** |  | **Number of employees** |  |
| **Interest in manufacturing EFB** | * High * Medium * Low | | |
| **Type of enterprise** | * Food manufacturer * Miller/processor * Agricultural cooperative * Trader/aggregator | | |
| Current knowledge and expertise with food safety standards, certification and registration of food products | Yes | No |  |
| Past experience with food safety certification and registration standards | A lot | Some | None |
| If SME has a lot of experience, what are the steps to obtain certification and registration? How much time would this involve?  If SME has some experience, how feasible is it to build their capacity to understand this process and obtain certification and registration?  If none, consider another SME. | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Product** | **Average monthly sales** (units sold) | **Unit price** | **Revenue** |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |

Annex 2. Step 2. Data Collection Form

Print 3–5 copies of this form and use it for rapid data collection as described in Step 2. At this point in the process, you do not need a comprehensive/representative sample, you just need to get an initial idea.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Retailer name** | **Total number of EFBs stocked** |
|  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **EFB name** | **Most popular**  **EFB** (*tick one*) | **EFB bought**  (*tick one*) | **Price** |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |

Annex 3. Step 4. AWP Protocol Template and Focus Group Discussion Guides

Assessment Protocol Example for RFSA Partners

Background

|  |
| --- |
| **Instructions:** This acceptability and willingness to pay (AWP) assessment protocol template will enable RFSA partners to review and document in a narrative form the specifics of what the participant will experience if s/he takes part in the assessment, as well as the objective of what you propose to assess within the context you will work. This process will help field assessment teams work in a systematic and harmonized manner. Depending on the sample size of the proposed assessment and the in-country requirements for field-based assessments, this protocol (once completed) may be submitted to the local institutional review board (IRB) for approval.  **Important:** This assessment protocol template provides guided instructions for RFSA partners to complete, as well as examples of narrative sections and information to provide. The RFSA partner will have to make adjustments based on its specific program objectives, technical implementation components, communities, and local context. |

1. **RFSA description**

*[insert description of the RFSA for which this protocol is developed]*

1. **Activity objective**

*[insert description of the objective of the activity for which this protocol is developed]*

1. **Products to be tested**

The products to be tested in the assessment are the enriched flour-based blends XXXX and XXXX intended for children ages 6–23 months. Information for these blends:

1. **Blend X**
2. **Blend Y**

*[Provide each blend’s ingredients, serving size, and preparation. Eventually, the small or medium enterprise (SME) selected to manufacture the blend(s) will need to develop a detailed product information sheet for each.]*

1. **Proposed packaging, pricing, and distribution of products in the implementation area**

*[Provide a short description of the proposed or envisioned packaging, pricing per package (and/or serving), and distribution of the blends]*

1. **Efficacy data for these or similar products in country XX**

*[Provide any information/data on blends that are similar (locally produced and/or imported) and available in the implementation zone that might compete with the proposed blends.]*

1. **Consumer perceptions about these or other specialized nutritional products**

*[Insert information you, the SME, or any other organization might have about similar flour blends in the implementation area. This can be specific to the ingredients and/or the blend as a whole, or similar products. This information will help you understand consumer behaviors and perceptions related to AWP for the blend that will be promoted through this activity. This information can be collected as part of previous assessments and/or as secondary data (e.g., literature and country context review)].*

1. **Data gaps to be filled through the assessment**

|  |
| --- |
| **Instruction:** The AWP assessment aims to fill remaining data gaps in background information such as:   * Development of consumer profiles for each product. * Data on household decision-making about food and non-food expenditures in the implementation area. * Food beliefs related to age, gender, and pregnant and lactating and health status (e.g., feeding during and after illness). * Community members’ perceptions about current rations distributed and/or received. * Family decision-making about rations and sharing of rations, inside and outside the household. |

*[Identify and list the data gaps you plan to fill with this AWP assessment here.]*

Activity Information

1. **RFSA key components and interventions [including social and behavior change]**

The RFSA aims to…*[please complete]*

1. **Information about current rations**

*[Insert a description of any current rations provided or food products described and update with information that is specific to your RFSA program]*

**Example**: The [insert name of RFSA program] distributes monthly rations to pregnant and lactating women and children under two years of age. Ration enrollment is conducted through health centers, community health and nutrition volunteers, and staff across program components. The [insert name of RFSA program] plans to continue to provide fortified oil in the communities in which the targeted blends will be piloted.

Study Objectives and Assessment Questions

*[Insert clear study objectives and questions and identify the sample size for the assessment.]*

**Example**: This rapid assessment aims to answer two questions:

* Among parents of children ages 6–23 months, are blends X and Y acceptable products in terms of taste, smell, color, texture, desirability, affordability, and convenience?
* What is the stated willingness of parents of children ages 6–23 months to pay for blends X and Y?

[Insert name of RFSA program] will use the answers to these questions to design a pilot intervention for households to use enriched flour blends as a complementary food for children ages 6–23 months. At the same time, [insert name of RFSA program] will support local food processor [insert name of SME] to develop an economic analysis for the scaled-up production, marketing, and distribution of these blends while phasing out rations.

Study Design and Methods

Design

**Example**: This rapid assessment will use qualitative research methods to assess product acceptability and stated willingness to pay among mothers and fathers of children ages 6–23 months.

Methodology

**Example**: The methodology used for the assessment will be focus group discussions (FGDs) with mothers and fathers using a semi-structured guide (annex 1). Each FGD will have 8–12 participants. During the discussions, the data collection team will prepare the product being tested (blend X or Y), and serve each participant a small amount in separate small containers with separate utensils. After participants have tasted the product, the data collectors will ask the remaining questions in the discussion guide.

The assessment will collect data by asking questions about:

1. Participants' perceptions of fortified or enriched food products generally, and the specific product being tested in the FGD, including taste, smell, color, texture, desirability, affordability, and convenience.
2. Sensory testing of blend X or Y, in which participants will sample the product then answer questions about its taste, smell, color, texture, desirability, affordability, and convenience.
3. Stated willingness to pay for the product being tested.
4. Household decision-making about diets of children ages 6–23 months and nutrition and well-being of pregnant and lactating women.
5. Household decision-making about food acquisition and purchase.

Information from FGD notes will be put into analysis matrices that will allow sensory and willingness to pay data to be collected, and themes related to consumer perceptions of the products, family dynamics, and household decision-making to be identified. Recordings of the FGDs will not be used to produce transcripts, but to clarify and add detail to FGD notes as needed. Findings from the analysis matrices will be summarized into draft summary documents that will be used to produce the assessment report.

|  |
| --- |
| **Instructions**: See annex 1 for the FGD guides that will be used to collect data. The guides should be translated into local languages and pre-tested. The RFSA team should organize a half-day training session for any data collectors involved in the field-based assessment to review sampling and selection criteria, team roles and responsibilities, data collection instruments/guides, and daily data processing tasks. |

Study Population and Background/Country Context

**Example**: Participants will be recruited from community groups involved in [insert RFSA program name] ongoing activities, including mother-care groups, cooking demonstrations, water, sanitation, and hygiene activities, etc. The data collector will engage parents of children ages 6–23 months.

Sampling Plan

**Example**: To ensure that perspectives from a range of communities are captured in the [insert RFSA program name] implementation area, we will use purposive sampling to engage households in two districts in each region of the program. Because the agroecological, economic, and food security contexts vary, data will be collected in one coastal and one inland community in each region. Each FGD will have 8–12 participants. FGD participants must be:

* Over 18 years of age.
* A regular participant in at least one type of community group facilitated by [insert RFSA program name].
* A mother or father of a child who is 6–23 months old.

Regional RFSA staff will support the selection of the communities and respondents. Communities will be selected based on a range of considerations including agroecological zone, number of beneficiaries in the community, and accessibility.

**Group Segmentation**

*[Group segmentation will depend on whether the different communities within the implementation zone are homogenous or heterogeneous]*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Community** | **Region** | Mothers of children 6–23 months, testing blend X and/or Y | Fathers of children 6–23 months, testing blend X and/or Y |
| Number of FGDs | Number of FGDs |
| A |  |  |  |
| B |  |  |
| C |  |  |  |
| D |  |  |

**Example**: With this segmentation plan for primary groups and types of communities, the assessment team will need to conduct a total of [XX] focus groups in [XX] communities. Below is a calendar showing how the team can cover [XX] communities over the course of 8 days. At the end of each day, the team will meet to assess if any changes need to be made for the next day and clean up/clarify notes. This calendar has space if more days are needed to complete FGDs with any groups in any of the communities; these are the follow-up days at the end (e.g., Day 9 and 10).

| **Week 1** | | | | | **Week 2** | | | | | **Week 3** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | *Rest and data clean up* | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | *Rest and data clean up* | Day 9 | Day 10 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Composition of the Data Collection Team**

| **Name** | **Role** | **Responsibility** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *[insert]* | Facilitator/interviewer | *[insert]* |
| *[insert]* | Note taker | *[insert]* |
| *[insert]* | Supervisor/observer | *[insert]* |
| *[insert]* | *[insert other]* | *[insert]* |

Limitations and Risks to Validity

**Example**: The narrow focus of the assessment is to enable the in-depth exploration of key questions in a specific location is an inherent limitation for generalizability to other locations. Site selection is limited and selection of participants will be purposive. Therefore, the application of findings could be limited to the assessment sites. Moreover, FGDs and product trials may lack reliability and cause concern for the validity of the findings. There is a risk of response bias during FGDs. Language and context translation may also limit a full understanding of the findings.

The assessment team will use an informed consent form to minimize the risk of response bias by assuring participants that they can stop participating in the FGD at any time, or not answer a particular question. The assessment team will have audio recordings as backup (if participants agree to be tape-recorded). The limitations will be described in the assessment report to ensure that the findings are presented and framed appropriately.

Ethics and Confidentiality

**Example**: The study will initiate data collection after obtaining approval from the host country IRB (as necessary).

All participants will be of the age to give consent (i.e., 18 years). Before any data collection, the assessment team will obtain informed consent from all participants using IRB-approved forms prepared in [insert applicable language] and the host-country language. The interviewer or facilitator will read the consent form to the participants and obtain their verbal consent. The notetaker will witness the consent. We will ensure that each respondent understands that participation in the FDG is completely voluntary and there will be no negative consequences for refusing. Participants will also be informed that their confidentiality will be protected.

Risks

**Example**: Participating in this assessment poses minimal risks, but the timing of data collection and the nature of the inquiry may cause discomfort for participants. The loss of the participant’s time will be the main burden of the assessment (each FGD will last 60–90 minutes). It is possible that a participant will be uncomfortable with a question. We will minimize the risk of this by re-explaining the purpose of the assessment and the data collection procedures, and ensuring that facilitators receive high-quality training.

Benefits to Participants

**Example**: The assessment may not offer any direct benefits to participants, but the data collected through their participation will provide information for delivering broader nutrition benefits to the community. Assessment participants will not receive monetary payment nor incur any out-of-pocket costs.

Confidentiality

**Example**: All recorded data will be de-identified to protect participants’ privacy, and any paper transcripts or notes will be stored in a locked file cabinet until they are uploaded to a secure, cloud-based platform. Only the RFSA staff and investigators will have access to the information collected from participants.

Assessment Implementation

**Example**: This assessment will be conducted from [insert time period date/month/year to date/month/year] and supported by the key quality assurance principles described below. Once the assessment has been completed, the team will determine the most appropriate audiences and mechanisms for the dissemination of findings and conclusions.

Quality Assurance during Data Collection

**Example**: The [insert title of specialist] will spot-check audio recordings and notes for consistency and quality and that length it is as expected, and follow up for particularly short or long interviews to ask what happened.

Instructions for spot-checking audio recordings:

* Open the audio file and make sure it plays.
* Listen to ensure the audio quality is good enough to take notes or transcribe.
* Make sure it is a different interview than others (that one recording was not uploaded more than once with the same file name).
* If the interview is being translated, ascertain that everything participants say is being translated (e.g., that the translation is not much shorter than a participant’s original response).
* Listen to ascertain that the respondent selection is in line with the protocol.
* Listen to two questions and answers from each section of the FGD guide.
* Promptly give data collectors feedback based on the spot checks.

Instructions for spot-checking interview notes:

* Look for missing data (e.g., name), varying lengths of documents and answers (between and across interviewers), and quality concerns.
* Make sure that needed information about the interview/focus group was recorded (e.g., date, location).
* If data quality is poor, consider reading all notes instead of spot-checking.

Reporting and Dissemination

*[Fill in as appropriate]*

Timeline

**Example**: Table 1 presents timeline for the detailed implementation of all activities involved in the assessment described in this protocol.

**Table 1. Timeline Example**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Timeline** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

References

*[Insert as appropriate if secondary data or literature was used for sections of this protocol]*

Annex 1. Data Collection Instruments

Discussion Guide for Mothers of Children 6–23 Months Testing Blend X or Y

Discussion Guide for Fathers of Children 6–23 Months Testing Blend X or Y

Annex 2. Ethical Review

IRB Approval Documents

[if IRB approval is required, we suggest that you include/attach any IRB approval documents here]

# Focus Group Discussion Guide for Mothers: Testing Blend X

[Testing of more than one blend at the same time is possible, but please adjust the references to ‘blend X’ accordingly, and ensure that this is clearly communicated to participants]

**Purpose of focus group discussion (FDG):**

Explore mothers’ awareness of blend X from a sensory and acceptability perspective, and understand more about their willingness to pay for it. Explore family attitudes, dynamics, and decision-making about women’s and children’s diets to identify barriers and opportunities related to the regular purchase and consumption of blend X.

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Start time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ End time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Community (town and region): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Number of participants: \_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |
| --- |
| **Note to Facilitator:**  ***At the beginning of the session, introduce yourself and everyone on the team who is observing, taking notes or photographs, or helping in any way.***  **Introduction:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. These are my colleagues \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We work with **[insert RFSA program name]**, a nutrition program that is funded by the United States Agency for International Development. Today, we are interested in learning about daily life, food, and family health in **[insert community name]**. We will use what we learn today to improve our program [**describe what it does**].  This will not take more than 90 minutes. Your ideas and answers to our questions are very important to us. Everything you say has value; there are **NO** right or wrong answers. You are free to join this discussion, but if you choose not to, you will not lose any benefits or services. If you do participate, feel free to say whatever you  are thinking. We will not share your name outside this group, and your responses will be anonymous. Do you agree to join this discussion?  We would like to record this discussion. No one will have access to the recording except for those of us on this team and the **[insert RFSA program name]** staff.  **Permission to record**? Yes/no\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Do we have your permission to take photographs?*(Only photograph those who give permission)*  **Permission for photographs**? Yes/no\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  If you have any questions after today, please contact **[insert name of assessment coordinator**], at **[insert email address],** or **[insert phone number].** Thank you for your time! |

|  |
| --- |
| **Note to Note-Taker**:  Try to capture the major ideas and statements that relate to for instance the majority of participants agreeing or not agreeing. Always note which question that the facilitator and participants are referring to. If the facilitator asks a question that is not in the guide, note the question as it is asked and try to capture the answers. If needed, use the extra paper and note the name of the group and the corresponding number of the question.  **Note to observer/supervisor (if needed):** You can take notes about the answers, but focus on the dynamics of the group and how people are reacting to the questions and the discussion. If you can, note who are the most active participants and/or any outliers so we can follow up with them. |

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

**Testing Blend X**

**Data collection team:** Make sure you have a large colored print or copy of Figure 1 on a sheet of flip chart paper. Prepare blend X according to packet instructions. Make enough to for 8–12 people to have a small sample. Ask participants to wash their hands before tasting to demonstrate proper hygiene and feeding practices. For hygiene reasons, serve each participant the sample of blend X in a small individual container with utensil.

**Before giving the samples of blend X say:** This is a porridge made from enriched flour that is designed to complement the daily diet of children ages 6–23 months. It is designed to fit with children’s taste preferences and ability to eat. We’ll ask what you think about blend X after you taste it.

1. After participants have tasted blend X, show them Figure 1**.** Read the phrase which goes with each face so they understand its meaning. Ask the participants to raise their hand when you point to the face that reflects how they feel about blend X. Count how many raise their hands for each face and note it below.

**Figure 1. Appreciation Rating**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Five face emojis on Appreciation Rating. (Left to right) Broad smile, little smile, neutral smile, disliked little smile, and disliked lot smile. | | | | |
| **Liked it a lot** | **Liked it**  **a little** | **Didn’t like or**  **dislike it** | **Disliked it**  **a little** | **Disliked it a lot** |

Number of participants who liked it a lot \_\_\_\_

Number of participants who liked it a little \_\_\_\_

Number of participants who didn’t like or disliked it \_\_\_\_

Number of participants who disliked it a little \_\_\_\_

Number of participants who disliked it a lot \_\_\_\_

1. Ask the group to rate product taste, smell, color, and consistency. For each category below, ask participants to raise their hand when you say the rating they agree with. Tabulate the number of people who raise their hand for each rating below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Bad** | **Not great** | **Good** |
|  |  |  |  |
| Taste |  |  |  |
| Smell |  |  |  |
| Color |  |  |  |
| Consistency |  |  |  |
| **Overall tally** |  |  |  |

**Appreciating the Blend**

Capture additional information about participants’ appreciation of and willingness to pay for blend X based on the following questions:

1. Tell me about the taste of the food you just tried.
   1. What did you like about it?
   2. What did you dislike about it?
2. Do you think you would feed this to your baby if you had this food product?

a. Tell me a bit more about why you would or would not feed this food to your baby.

b. Tell me about other foods like this that you have fed your baby before, if any. *(probe: name of the food, where purchased or obtained, what made ii the same as blend X, what made it different).*

1. How would you prepare this food at home? *(Probe: thicker, thinner, add sugar/salt/oil, cook longer, serve cooler, etc.)*

a. At home, would you add other foods to the blend X? If so, which?

b. Would it be easy or difficult to prepare blend X 2 or 3 times every day at home? Why? *(Adjust based on serving size and suggested number of servings for children ages 6–23 months per day.)*

1. At what price would you consider blend X to be so expensive that you would not consider buying it?
2. At what price would you consider blend X starting to get expensive, so that it is not out of the question, but you would have to give some thought to buying it?
3. At what price would you consider blend X to be a bargain—a great buy for the money?
4. At what price would you consider blend X to be priced so low that you would feel the quality could not be very good?

**Decision-Making and Food Security**

Ask the following questions after tasting and discussing blend X.

1. What foods are usually purchased outside the home for the family?
   1. How do families decide which foods to purchase and how much of them?
   2. Who usually gives the money for shopping?
   3. Who usually does the shopping?
2. What size package would you like to purchase a product like blend X in? For example, would you prefer to purchase a package that contains enough for one serving, a week’s worth of servings, or more? Why?
3. Where would you prefer to purchase a product like this? *(Probe: open-air market, local container store/retailer, health clinic or pharmacy, other?)*
4. Have you received a product like this as a ration from the **[insert RFSA program name]**? If so, tell us about that product. How is it different from or the same as blend X?
5. How do families decide how to use the products they receive from **[insert RFSA program name]**?

a. Are products shared with the whole family, or just for some members? If by just some, which?

b. Do families share the products they receive from the program with others who do not live in the same household? If so, who?

**Relationships, Roles, and Nutrition**

Thank you for your great participation so far. We have a few more questions that are related to family relationships, caregiving, and health.

1. Tell me about what makes someone a good mother. *(Probe: tell me more…)*
2. Tell me about what makes someone a good father. *(Probe: tell me more…)*
   1. Who knows when a baby should be given his/her first foods? When is that? Is it the same moment for all babies or does it differ?
   2. Who usually prepares and feeds the child the first food: the mother, grandmother, or someone else?
3. After the first food, who usually feeds young children?
4. With babies who do not want to eat, who is best at getting them to eat?
5. What do people do if a child doesn’t want to eat? Why?

**Thank you very much for your time today!**

## Focus Group Discussion Guide for Fathers: Testing Blend X

[Testing of more than one blend at the same time is possible, but please adjust the references to ‘blend X’ accordingly, and ensure that this is clearly communicated to participants]

**Purpose of focus group discussion (FDG):**

Explore fathers’ awareness of blend X from a sensory and acceptability perspective, and understand more their willingness to pay for it. Explore family attitudes, dynamics, and decision-making about women’s and children’s diets to identify barriers and opportunities related to the regular purchase and consumption of blend X.

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Start time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ End time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Community (town and region): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Number of participants: \_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |
| --- |
| **Note to Facilitator:**  ***At the beginning of the session, introduce yourself and everyone on the team who is observing, taking notes or photographs, or helping in any way.***  **Introduction:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. These are my colleagues \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We work with **[insert RFSA program name]**, a nutrition program that is funded by the United States Agency for International Development. Today, we are interested in learning about daily life, food, and family health in **[insert community name]**. We will use what we learn today to improve our program [**describe what it does**].  This will not take more than 90 minutes. Your ideas and answers to our questions are very important to us. Everything you say has value; there are **NO** right or wrong answers. You are free to join this discussion, but if you choose not to, you will not lose any benefits or services. If you do participate, feel free to say whatever you are thinking. We will not share your name outside this group, and your responses will be anonymous. Do you agree to join this discussion?  We would like to record this discussion. No one will have access to the recording except for those of us on this team and the **[insert RFSA program name]** staff.  **Permission to record**? Yes/no\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Do we have your permission to take photographs?*(Only photograph those who give permission)*  **Permission for photographs**? Yes/no\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  If you have any questions after today, please contact **[insert name of assessment coordinator**], at **[insert email address],** or **[insert phone number].** Thank you for your time! |

|  |
| --- |
| **Note to Note-Taker**:  Try to capture the major ideas and statements that relate to for instance the majority of participants agreeing or not agreeing. Always note which question that the facilitator and participants are referring to. If the facilitator asks a question that is not in the guide, note the question as it is asked and try to capture the answers. If needed, use the extra paper and note the name of the group and the corresponding number of the question.  **Note to observer/supervisor (if needed):** You can take notes about the answers, but focus on the dynamics of the group and how people are reacting to the questions and the discussion. If you can, note who are the most active participants and/or any outliers so we can follow up with them. |

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

**Testing Blend X**

**Data collection team:** Make sure you have a large colored print or copy of Figure 1 on a sheet of flip chart paper. Prepare blend X according to packet instructions. Make enough to for 8–12 people to have a small sample. Ask participants to wash their hands before tasting to demonstrate proper hygiene and feeding practices. For hygiene reasons, serve each participant the sample of blend X in a small individual container with utensil.

**Before giving the samples of** blend X **say:** This is a porridge made from enriched flour that is designed to complement the daily diet of children ages 6–23 months. It is designed to fit with children’s taste preferences and ability to eat. We’ll ask what you think about blend X after you taste it.

1. After participants have tasted blend X, show them Figure 1**.** Read the phrase that goes with each face so they understand its meaning. Ask participants to raise their hand when you point to the face that reflects how they feel about blend X. Count how many raise their hands for each face and note it below.

**Figure 1. Appreciation Rating**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Five face emojis on Appreciation Rating. (Left to right) Broad smile, little smile, neutral smile, disliked little smile, and disliked lot smile. | | | | |
| **Liked it a lot** | **Liked it a little** | **Didn’t like or disliked it** | **Disliked it a little** | **Disliked it a lot** |

Number of participants who liked it a lot \_\_\_\_

Number of participants who liked it a little \_\_\_\_

Number of participants who didn’t like or disliked it \_\_\_\_

Number of participants who disliked it a little \_\_\_\_

Number of participants who disliked it a lot \_\_\_\_

1. Ask the group to rate the product taste, smell, color, and consistency. For each category below, ask participants to raise their hand when you say the rating they agree with. Tabulate the number of people who raise their hand for each.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Bad** | **Not great** | **Good** |
| Taste |  |  |  |
| Smell |  |  |  |
| Color |  |  |  |
| Consistency |  |  |  |
| **Overall tally** |  |  |  |

**Appreciating the Blend**

Capture additional information about participants’ appreciation of and willingness to pay for blend X based on the following questions:

1. Tell me about the taste of the food you just tried.
   1. What did you like about it?
   2. What did you dislike about it?
2. Do you think you or your wife would feed this to your baby if you had this food product?

a. Tell me a bit more about why you or your wife would or would not feed this food to your baby.

b. Tell me about other foods like this that you or your wife have fed your baby before, if any *(probe: name of the food, where purchased or obtained, what made it the same as blend X, what made it different).*

1. At what price would you consider blend X to be so expensive that you would not consider buying it?
2. At what price would you consider blend X starting to get expensive, so that it is not out of the question, but you would have to give some thought to buying it?
3. At what price would you consider blend X to be a bargain—a great buy for the money?
4. At what price would you consider blend X to be priced so low that you would feel the quality could not be very good?

**Decision-Making and Food Security**

Ask the following questions after tasting and discussing blend X.

1. What foods are usually purchased outside the home for the family?
2. How do families decide which foods to purchase and how much of them?
3. Who usually gives the money for shopping?
4. Who usually does the shopping?
5. What size package would you want to purchase a product like blend X in? For example, would you prefer to purchase a package that contains enough for one serving, a week’s worth of servings, or more? Why?
6. Where would you prefer to purchase a product like this? *(Probe: open-air market, local container store/retailer, health clinic or pharmacy, other?)*
7. Have you received a product like this as a ration from the **[insert RFSA program name]**? If so, tell us about that product. How is it different from or the same as blend X?
8. How do families decide how to use the products they receive from **[insert RFSA program name]**?
   1. Are products shared with the whole family, or just for some members? If by just some, which?
   2. Do families share the products they receive from the program with people who do not live in the same household? If so, who?

**Relationships, Roles, and Nutrition**

Thank you for your participation so far. We have a few more questions related to family relationships, caregiving, and health.

1. Tell me about what makes someone a good mother. *(Probe: tell me more…)*
2. Tell me about what makes someone a good father *(Probe: tell me more…)*
3. Who knows when a baby should be given his/her first foods? When is that? Is it the same moment for all babies or does it differ?
4. Who usually prepares and feeds the child the first food; the mother, grandmother, or someone else?
   1. After the first food, who usually feeds young children?
   2. When babies do not want to eat, who is best at getting them to eat?
5. What do people do if a child doesn’t want to eat? Why?

**Thank you very much for your time today!**

Annex 4. Step 8. Data Collection Form

Use this form to record the daily sales revenue for products that are being pilot tested. Print one form for each retailer. Data should be entered by the retailer.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Retailer name** | **TEST A / B / C / D**  (delete as appropriate) |
|  |  |

**Sales Revenue**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Days** | **WEEK 1** | **WEEK 2** | **WEEK 3** | **WEEK 4** |
| **Monday** |  |  |  |  |
| **Tuesday** |  |  |  |  |
| **Wednesday** |  |  |  |  |
| **Thursday** |  |  |  |  |
| **Friday** |  |  |  |  |
| **Saturday** |  |  |  |  |
| **Sunday** |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Revenue** |  |  |  |  |

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USAID Advancing Nutrition is the Agency’s flagship multi-sectoral nutrition project, addressing the root causes of malnutrition to save lives and enhance long-term health and development.

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1. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are defined as non-subsidiary, independent firms which employ less than a given number of employees. This number varies between countries, with the most frequent upper limit being 250 employees. Small firms are generally those with fewer than 50 employees, while micro-enterprises have at most ten, or in some cases five workers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Further referred to as enriched flour-based blend (EFB) for the purpose of this workbook and the Guide to Optimize Diets using Local Foods for Improved Nutrition for Women and Children. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A similar workbook is available to support a household approach for production of complementary foods (*hyperlink*). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Market Systems Resilience: A Framework for Measurement](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/Market-Systems-Resilience-Measurement-Framework-Report-Final_public-August-2019.pdf); USAID weblink for [Market Based Approaches](https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/private-sector-engagement/market-based-approaches); and the [USAID Private Sector Engagement Policy](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/usaid_psepolicy_final.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. USAID Advancing Nutrition provided TA to the FIOVANA RFSA in Madagascar, and one lesson learned was the extent to which these types of transfers can reduce the likelihood of sustainably being able to implement a market-driven approach. Even though households indicated they were willing to pay for an EFB, it was infeasible to transport and market it in the RFSAs program area because few could afford the EFB so the marketing approach would not be viable. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In this context, local refers to foods that are produced within or in close proximity to your program area. As with other types of resources transfers, importing food even within a region can be challenging; limiting to local foods can help ensure regular access to these foods and promote long-term sustainability. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Depending on the size and location, cooperatives may also be represented in larger cooperative unions. It is important to understand the types of ‘regrouping’ that farm-based organizations take, which depends on the local context in which they operate. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For the purpose of the approach applied in this workbook, based on RFSA field-based realities and appropriate program linkages, we suggest that the RFSA partner focus on SMEs. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. If local complementary food blends or even imported complementary food blends are available in local shops, some households have the means to buy these products. Therefore, there is familiarity with this type of product, some households are willing to purchase it, and there is some social acceptability for purchasing and preparing local complementary food blends. This information also suggests that prices may be high or variable, such that poorer households are unable to afford these products. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Depending on your [local] context and availability of resources, consider contracting an agency to support the development and launch of a marketing strategy. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)