

ADVANCING FOOD FORTIFICATION OPPORTUNITIES TO REINFORCE DIETS (USAID AFFORD)

Vitamins and minerals—often referred to as micronutrients—are vital to healthy development, disease prevention, and wellbeing. Micronutrient deficiencies are the most widespread form of malnutrition as a majority of essential micronutrients must come from the diet. Countless individuals worldwide suffer from deficiencies in vitamins and minerals, often because they cannot access a healthy and diverse diet. The effects can be devastating, including birth defects, compromised cognitive and physical development for children, anemia, weakened immune systems, and child mortality.

Large-scale food fortification (LSFF) tackles micronutrient deficiencies head on by adding essential vitamins and minerals to commonly consumed food products, increasing their nutritional value. LSFF provides a safety net against vitamin and mineral inadequacies that often occur seasonally or during crises when food supply is low and access to a diverse diet is limited. Large-scale food fortification is one of the most cost-effective, lifesaving interventions. Country-wide fortification can save national economies an estimated 2-3 percent of their GDP.

What is USAID AFFORD?

The global USAID AFFORD program represents a holistic approach to LSFF that puts businesses at the core of the solution while strategically engaging with the public, private and civil society sectors. The five-year program (2022-2027) will strengthen connections and capacity across food systems, influencing relevant global initiatives, and contributing to the population-, market-, and government-level fortification objectives. AFFORD will also scale effective, integrated interventions across development contexts and increase private sector engagement to reduce micronutrient deficiencies.

Its activities are based on four key elements:

Putting the food industry at the center: While LSFF is a public-health imperative, it cannot succeed if the food industry does not have the capacity or motivation to adopt and scale it.

Data-driven decision-making: Generating and sharing accurate, timely, and localized fortification data empowers government, civil society, and the food industry to drive forward the nutrition agenda.

Convergence of innovations: AFFORD will work across the various disciplines working on nutrition to share insights and ideas that enhance LSFF surveillance, data visualization, training, M&E, and cross-sector accountability.

Systems approach and local-led development: A number of stakeholders play various important roles in the system. AFFORD will engage with the public, private, and civil society actors at national, regional, and global levels, expanding and sustaining interventions, mobilizing commitment, leadership, and investment, and fostering better collaboration to scale LSFF.



Examples of Potential Work under AFFORD

Many of AFFORD's activities will be carried out through Associate Awards and buy-ins from USAID missions. AFFORD offers an array of initiatives, including:

Strengthening the enabling environment: Working with civil society and government to ensure that legislation and regulations are optimized to facilitate and encourage LSFF; facilitating effective and efficient monitoring and enforcement of fortification standards; and building government capacity to plan and finance food fortification activities.

Technology transfer and capacity building: Delivering sector-wide training on impactful, high-priority topics to food businesses and other key stakeholders; designing and delivering customized technical assistance that addresses the specific technical and business challenges of individual food processors; and mobilizing funding for needed investments in food businesses.

Learning and influencing: Collecting and analyzing market and household data to identify nutritional needs; strengthening consumer groups to advocate for fortification and hold food companies accountable; and conducting a landscape analysis of fortified foods, including market share size and value analysis to identify the needs of food producers, regulatory inspectors, and laboratories. AFFORD envisions holding convenings that bring together leaders from the private and public sectors to stay ahead of trends in LSFF and establish national accountability mechanisms that better integrate industry.

Who comprises AFFORD?

TechnoServe is responsible for overall implementation of the project. AFFORD will draw on TechnoServe's Food Processor Support Toolbox—proven methodologies for processor support and trust-building refined through use in projects including [SAPFF](#), [AINFP](#), and [SAFE](#)—to address sector-wide challenges and opportunities and provide customized assistance to individual processors.

Nutrition International has been a leader in the global fight against malnutrition by delivering high-impact, low-cost nutrition interventions for 30 years. Active in LSFF for over 20 years, NI works with governments and other fortification partners, combining deep technical expertise and know-how with a flexible approach. NI will lead work on the enabling environment.

Food Fortification Initiative (FFI) has 20 years of experience convening public, private, and civic stakeholders to build fortification programs in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, India, and the Middle East. Based at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health, FFI will provide leadership to develop and pilot innovative data collection tools and approaches.

ISF Advisors brings a team with experience from top-tier strategy, investment banking, and corporate finance firms, leading strategic and financial advisory services to mobilize capital for a more sustainable, equitable, and productive global food system. ISF is AFFORD's leader in access-to-finance solutions, providing a deep bench of innovative finance experts to identify barriers to finance for LSFF activities across target geographies.

Contact

For more information about how AFFORD can provide support, please contact the Agreement Officer's Representative, Rebecca Egan (regan@usaid.gov) or Project Director, Brent Wibberley (bwibberley@tns.org)