

THE FORTIFICATION ASSESSMENT COVERAGE TOOLKIT (FACT)



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ABOUT GAIN

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is a Swiss-based foundation launched at the United Nations in 2002 to tackle the human suffering caused by malnutrition. Working with governments, businesses and civil society, we aim to transform food systems so that they deliver more nutritious food for all people, especially the most vulnerable.

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GAIN BRIEFING PAPER SERIES

GAIN Briefing Paper Series provide essential information in a succinct, accessible form to support informed decision making by stakeholders in the food system to improve the consumption of nutritious, safe food for all people, especially the most vulnerable.

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SUMMARY

Today, over 100 countries have mandatory food fortification programmes. However, information on how well those programmes are working is limited in most countries. Fortification programmes are proven to have an impact on nutrition, but this impact can only be realised if nutrient intakes increase among those with inadequate intakes. Knowing the quality, coverage, and consumption patterns of fortified foods is critical to understand whether programmes will reach their potential.

Motivated by the need for such information for its own programmes, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) developed the Fortification Assessment Coverage Toolkit (FACT) in 2013 for carrying out coverage assessments of fortification programmes.

The FACT provides standardised methods for the collection, analysis, and synthesis of data on quality, coverage, and consumption of fortified foods across countries while allowing for adaptations to meet specific country needs and contexts. Specifically, it provides step-by-step guidance on how to decide, design, and conduct a FACT survey. Information generated by a FACT survey can be used by decision makers to improve fortification programmes by documenting successes and identifying gaps.

The FACT Manual and its accompanying 10 practical tools and templates are available to download at www.gainhealth.org.

KEY MESSAGES

- Today, over 100 countries have mandatory food fortification programmes, but information on how well they are working is limited.
- To help tackle this, GAIN developed the Fortification Assessment Coverage Toolkit (FACT), which provides details on how to plan, design, implement, analyse, and report a FACT survey.
- FACT was designed to help stakeholders collect, analyse, and synthesise standardised data on quality, coverage, and consumption of fortified foods.
- FACT fills a gap in the availability of standardised tools to generate information to understand how well programmes are working and how to improve them.

WHY DOES COVERAGE MATTER?

Today, over 100 countries have mandatory food fortification programmes (1). However, information on how well those programmes are working is limited in most countries (2). Fortification programmes are proven to have an impact on nutrition, but this impact can only be realised if nutrient intakes increase among those with inadequate intakes.

The quality of fortified foods and the consumption patterns—that is, who consumes it (e.g. rural or poor groups), where it comes from (e.g. industrial or home production), and how much is consumed and how often—are critical to understand whether programmes will reach their potential.

Motivated by the need for such information for its own programmes, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) developed the Fortification Assessment Coverage Toolkit (FACT) in 2013 for carrying out coverage assessments of fortification programmes (3,4).

WHAT IS THE FORTIFICATION ASSESSMENT COVERAGE TOOLKIT (FACT)?

The FACT is a Toolkit that provides standardised methods for the collection, analysis, and synthesis of data on quality, coverage, and consumption of fortified foods across countries. Specifically, it provides step-by-step guidance on how to plan, design, implement, analyse, and report a FACT survey. The Toolkit consists of a manual and 10 practical tools and templates (4). The FACT Manual was designed to provide guidance at each link in the nutrition data value chain, from prioritisation to decision making (Figure 1) (5).

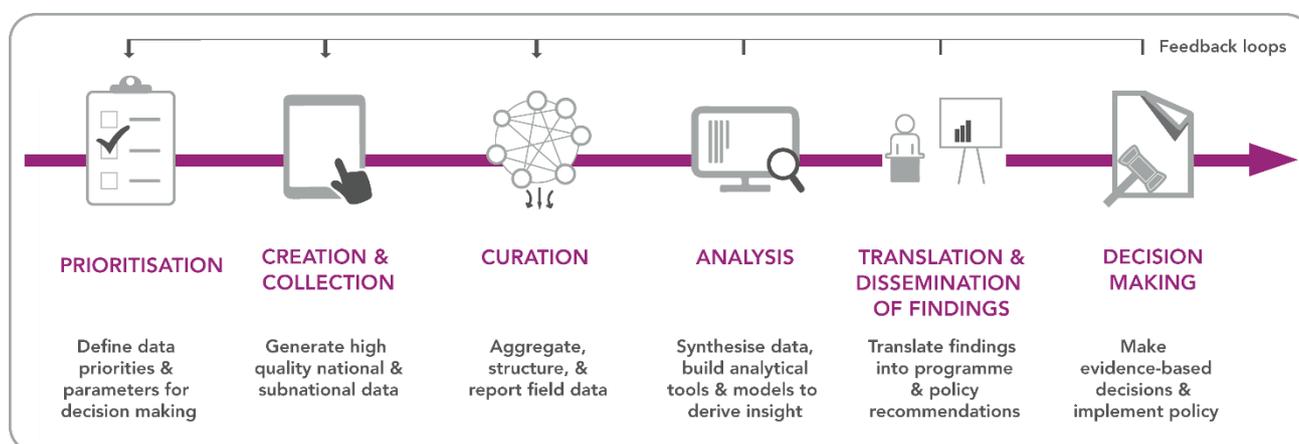


Figure 1: Nutrition data value chain. (Adapted from the 2017 Global Nutrition Report (5)).

In 2013, the initial FACT method was pilot-tested in Ghana (6). From 2013-2017, it was deployed and refined across 16 countries with large-scale fortification programmes (i.e. focused on staple foods and/or condiments) and five countries with targeted fortification programmes (i.e. focused on foods for infants and children).

In 2018, FACT coverage indicators were successfully pilot-tested in national Performance Monitoring and Accountability (PMA) 2020 surveys in Burkina Faso and Kenya. This confirmed their potential for inclusion in large household surveys, such as Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster (MICS) Surveys.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The FACT method focuses on three main questions:

1. Is a fortified food available and meeting the quality standards?
2. Are the population groups with the greatest need and potential to benefit from fortification (e.g., rural, poor, or food insecure populations, or those with low dietary diversity) consuming enough fortified foods for there to be impact?
3. To what extent are fortified foods contributing to nutrient intakes in the population and in specific groups at highest risk?

A FACT survey can be commissioned as a unique survey, or FACT indicators can be added to other data collection efforts where fortification and/or its outcomes are of interest (e.g., a nutrition survey or surveillance system).

HOW CAN THE RESULTS BE USED?

Information generated by a FACT survey can be used by decision makers to improve fortification programmes by documenting successes and identifying gaps (Figure 2).

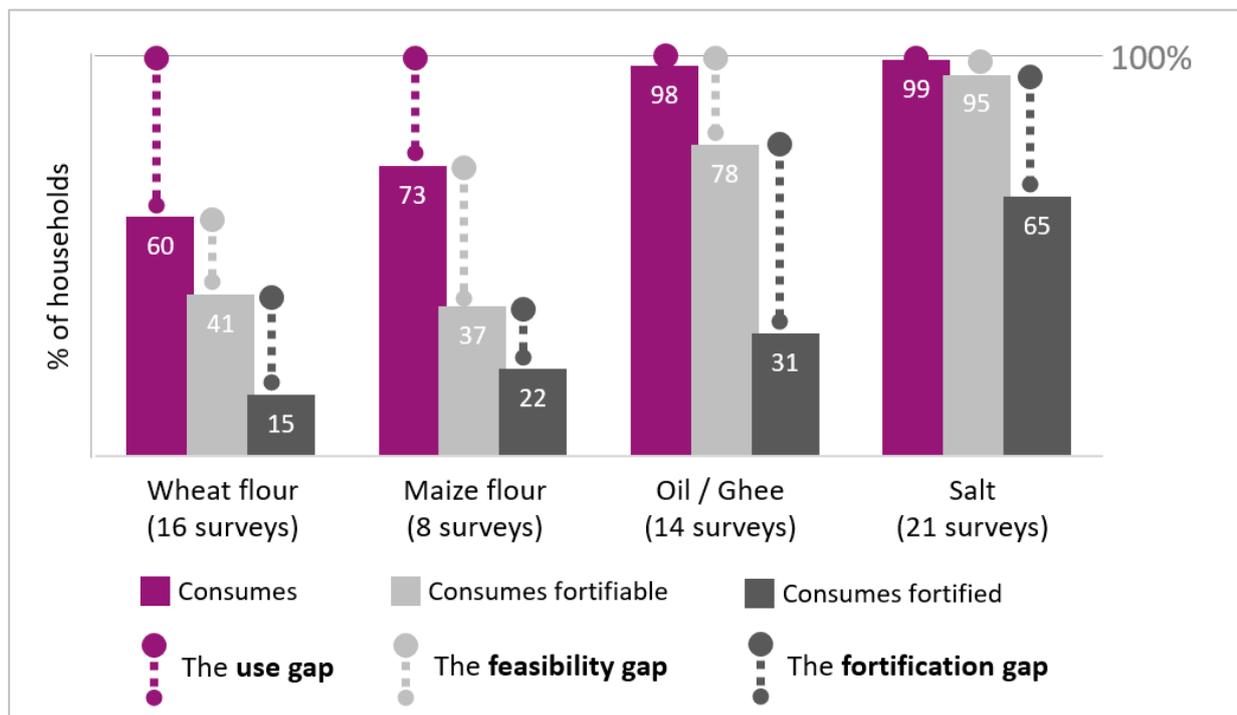


Figure 2: Aggregated FACT coverage data from on-going fortification programmes highlight several major gaps in programme design and implementation (GAIN analysis) (7–9).

For example, the *use gap* highlights the extent to which foods that are widely consumed have been selected for inclusion in a programme. The *feasibility gap* highlights the extent to which the programme was well designed, meaning it selected foods to fortify based on those that are used in a fortifiable form by a high proportion of households. The *fortification gap* highlights one element of how well the programme is being implemented.

Recent FACT household coverage results were found to be actionable and to drive programmatic and policy decisions (Box 1).

BOX 1. FACT HOUSEHOLD COVERAGE RESULTS WERE FOUND TO BE ACTIONABLE AND TO DRIVE PROGRAMMATIC AND POLICY DECISIONS

In **Nigeria** in 2017, FACT results revealed universal coverage of fortifiable bouillon in Ebonyi and Sokoto states (>99%). These findings were used to advocate for bouillon as a fortification vehicle, which led to efforts now being scaled up in West Africa.

In **Pakistan**, wheat flour is consumed by nearly 100% of the population. In 2017, FACT revealed that a large proportion of the population (40-68%, varying by province) consumed flour that is milled at small-scale *chakki* mills that are currently not included in the fortification programme. This resulted in a feasibility assessment of *chakki* mill fortification to determine if the scope of the programme should be expanded.

In **Nigeria** and **Tanzania** in 2015, FACT revealed that some foods chosen for fortification (maize flour and edible oil) had little potential for impact (i.e. a large *feasibility gap*), while others (wheat flour and salt) had high potential but needed action to improve compliance (i.e. close the *fortification gap*). Discussions were undertaken to encourage a focus on foods with potential for impact, and increased donor funding was secured for activities to improve quality and compliance for those foods.

WHO IS IT INTENDED FOR?

The Toolkit can be used by fortification programme stakeholders, such as government agencies, national and international organisations, universities, and individuals, who are responsible for planning, implementing, analysing, and reporting surveys that assess how well fortification programmes are working.

WHERE CAN IT BE FOUND?

The FACT Manual and its accompanying 10 tools and templates are available to download at www.gainhealth.org.

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