Flour Fortification Project

Project Objective
The overall project objective is improved nutrition for vulnerable women and children in Tajikistan, a key objective within the U.S. Government’s Feed the Future Initiative. With USAID support, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) works with partners to foster a sustainable national wheat flour fortification program to reduce iron deficiency anemia and improve intake of several micronutrients nationally.

Situation and Solution
The 2013 Demographic and Health survey indicates that micronutrient deficiencies are widespread in Tajikistan, with iron deficiency anemia affecting an estimated 24% of women of reproductive age and 28% of children under the age of five. This condition increases susceptibility to infection and reduces lifelong potential, with far-reaching economic consequences for the country.

Fortification of staple foods with vitamins and minerals has been recognized as one of the most cost-effective nutrition interventions to prevent and reduce micronutrient deficiencies when existing food supplies fail to deliver adequate levels of nutrients. Despite previous efforts to introduce wheat flour fortification in Tajikistan in the late 1990s and again from 2002-2007, there is currently no national flour fortification program.

The project will create support for fortification by:
- Support the Government of Tajikistan in the development and enactment of fortification legislation and policies, with a main focus on wheat flour fortification.
- Support adaptation of regional standards and regulations to the needs of the country.
- Provide technical assistance to improve the capacity of wheat flour and salt industries, in collaboration with UNICEF.
- Strengthen capabilities of food control authorities to enforce fortification legislation mainly at the factory level.

Highlighted Accomplishments
- Completed comprehensive assessments on improving nutrition through food fortification in Tajikistan: 1) wheat flour milling industry assessment; 2) in-depth assessment of three major labs; and 3) assessment of the legislation on food fortification in Tajikistan. Key findings include a number of positive trends for flour fortification:
  - Per capita consumption of flour is high throughout the country, making it an ideal food vehicle for fortification.
  - A national fortified flour initiative is recommended over one focused exclusively in one province, Khatlon.
  - All 3 laboratories assessed are internationally accredited but are not able to assess micronutrients in foods.
  - A mandatory law for production and import of fortified flour will support timely adoption of the process.
- Hosted a national multi-sectorial roundtable on scaling up wheat flour fortification and salt iodization in Tajikistan which led to signing of the Dushanbe Declaration on Food Fortification, demonstrating the government’s commitment to food fortification.
- Developed a draft National Action Plan on Wheat Flour Fortification with support from a group of experts representing the Tajikistan Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and other key stakeholders.

About USAID

USAID partners with the people of Tajikistan to increase food security, improve health and nutrition, strengthen basic education and enhance good governance. The U.S. Government’s Feed the Future initiative addresses food insecurity by improving agricultural production and profitability as well as nutrition outcomes for mothers and their children. USAID also works to strengthen civil society and local governance, supports implementation of national education and health strategies, and prevents and treats TB and HIV. In the energy sector, USAID promotes closer economic integration among the Central Asian Republics and between Central and South Asia by helping to create an economically competitive regional energy market that will increase access to and stabilize the cost of energy for the people of Tajikistan.

Since 1992, USAID has invested over $360 million in programs that support Tajikistan’s democratic institutions, health care, education, and economic growth.

https://www.usaid.gov/tajikistan

About GAIN

The project is implemented by GAIN in collaboration with stakeholders. GAIN is a Swiss-based international organization driven by the vision of a world without malnutrition. GAIN’s programs support large-scale food fortification, multi-nutrient supplements, nutritious foods for mothers and children, and enhancement of the nutritional content of agriculture products. The organization is delivering improved nutrition to an estimated 800 million people in more than 30 countries.

http://www.gainhealth.org