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# Advancing Wheat Flour Fortification in Tajikistan



## Assessment Report for Landscaping Analysis conducted March – May 2022

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## Acronyms

AAS	atomic absorption spectrophotometer
ADB	Asian Development Bank
NaFeEDTA	EDTA iron
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
GBAO	Gorno Badakshan Autonomous Oblast
Gosreserv	Agency on State Material Reserves of the Republic of Tajikistan
MoHSPP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population
SES	State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service
Tojikstandard	Agency of Standardization, Metrology, Certification and Trade Inspection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

## Executive Summary

Two billion people today are affected by deficiencies of essential vitamins and minerals (micronutrients), which can leave them susceptible to infectious diseases, impaired physical and mental development, reduced labour productivity, and increased risk of premature death.<sup>1</sup>

Micronutrient deficiencies in Tajikistan remain a public health problem with devastating short-term and long-term effects, especially among women, children, adolescents, and the elderly.

An important component of the overall strategy to address micronutrient deficiency, otherwise known as hidden hunger, is the large-scale fortification of staple foods regularly eaten in diets consumed around the world.<sup>2</sup>

In response to food fortification being identified as an effective measure to address hidden hunger in the country's context, in 2019, the Government of Tajikistan adopted the Law on Food Fortification. More specifically, building on a long history of flour fortification projects and initiatives, the law mandates that all locally produced wheat flour be fortified with two vitamins: B12 and B9, and two minerals: iron and zinc.

With just six (6) milling plants accounting for roughly 60 percent of domestic output, Tajikistan provides a conducive environment for scaling up wheat flour fortification because this highly concentrated wheat milling industry would largely simplify advocacy and enforcement efforts. Cooperation between these technically advanced and financially strong commercial partners could rapidly expand the fortification initiatives. In addition, imported wheat flour represents about 8 percent of consumption, meaning fortification of domestic production alone would provide more than adequate population coverage.

However, despite these positive factors, since the adoption of the mandatory wheat flour fortification law, the progress on scaling up has been slow. To understand the reasons behind the slow adoption of wheat flour fortification and the steps required to achieve industry compliance with the law, an assessment was undertaken by the World Food Programme in the first quarter of 2022 to analyse the current situation and draft a way forward for advancing wheat flour fortification in Tajikistan. As part of the assessment, multiple stakeholders from the government, the United Nations, civil society, donor organizations, international financial institutions, consumer forums, premix suppliers, and the wheat milling industry were consulted.

Findings from the stakeholder consultations reveal that the lack of desired progress in the implementation of flour fortification initiatives, despite the passing of the fortification law, can be attributed to several factors:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128028612000018>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B978012802861200002X>

- Poor understanding on the part of milling companies about premix supply and cost, enforcement procedures, and the public health benefits of flour fortification.
- Lack of coordination between the government departments responsible for the implementation of the fortification law with regard to compliance monitoring procedures and the need for standards for premix composition, bag markings, and use of the fortification logo.
- Lack of a common understanding among stakeholders, particularly the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population and the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service, about their role in enforcing the fortification law.
- A moratorium by presidential decree on government inspection visits of private companies until the end of 2022, though the law on moratoriums excludes food safety inspections.
- Lack of dedicated, central coordination of the flour fortification agenda among stakeholders.
- Lack of consistent funding for fortification activities in Tajikistan.

Considering the above factors inhibiting the advancement of wheat flour fortification in Tajikistan, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Develop a phased approach to advancing wheat flour fortification in Tajikistan.
- Initially focus on ensuring that the six (6) large-scale wheat flour mills, which have approximately 60 percent of the market share, start fortifying their wheat flour in accordance with the mandatory law by December 2022.
- Establish a dedicated inter-ministerial government technical working group with a clear high-level mandate and clear roles, responsibilities, and deliverables to expedite the enforcement of the mandatory wheat flour fortification law.
- Review the existing fortification law to include additional technical details about premix specifications and dosing.
- Amend the permission to 'Work Certificates' of existing milling companies after inspection to confirm that micro feeders are installed on all milling lines, an adequate supply of premix is in inventory, and written fortification procedures, including quality control, are in place.
- Issue 'Permission to Work' certificates to new mills only if they have micro feeders installed, an adequate supply of premix in inventory, and written fortification procedures, including quality control are in place.
- Involve civic groups in fortification monitoring and advocacy through the Consumer Union of Tajikistan.
- Initiate procedures to fortify the wheat flour from the strategic grain reserve.
- Provide continuous technical assistance and capacity-building support to government and flour mills to ensure the installation of requisite equipment and compliance with the mandatory wheat flour fortification law.

## Introduction

Tajikistan is the poorest country within Central Asia and the level of micronutrient deficiency represents a moderate to severe public health problem, according to the World Health Organization's definition. Micronutrient deficiency, otherwise known as hidden hunger, occurs when an individual does not consume sufficient quantities of one or more of the minerals and/or vitamins essential for optimal health. In Tajikistan, over 40 percent of women and children are affected by anaemia, 60 percent are iodine deficient and 47 percent and 37 percent, respectively, are Vitamin A deficient. The short-term and long-term consequences of micronutrient deficiencies are devastating, especially among women, children, adolescents, and the elderly. Generally, micronutrient deficiencies can leave individuals susceptible to infectious diseases, impaired physical and mental development, reduced labour productivity, and increased risk of premature death.<sup>1</sup>

The causes of micronutrient deficiencies are multidimensional and can be attributed to economic and physical access to nutritious foods and behavioural practices among the population. According to the 2018 Cost of the Diet analysis, in some regions, nutritious diets cost three (3) times more than diets that meet minimum energy needs. Despite the substantial achievement of reducing poverty from 81 percent in 1999 to 29.5 percent in 2019, the country continues to face food security and nutrition challenges, with 29-56 percent of households across different regions of the country unable to afford a nutritious diet. Households spend over half of their expenditures on food, and the rates are higher among the poor. During the lean season, access to nutritious foods is further constrained due to their limited availability in markets and high prices. Further, high consumption of energy-dense foods (e.g., bread and oil) is reported in Tajikistan regardless of household wealth status, and food choices are closely linked with cultural norms, beliefs, and practices.

An important component of the overall strategy to address micronutrient deficiency is the large-scale fortification of staple foods regularly eaten in diets consumed around the world. In Tajikistan's context, food fortification was identified as an effective measure to address hidden hunger, and with the daily per capita consumption of industrially milled wheat flour at approximately 225 grams, wheat flour was identified as an excellent candidate for fortification. In response, in the early 2000s, efforts to explore the fortification of wheat flour began, with a pilot flour fortification project conducted as part of the Central Asia regional program. Following many other projects and initiatives, in 2019, the Government of Tajikistan adopted the Law on Food Fortification, which regulates the fortification of various food products, including wheat flour. The standard stipulates that wheat flour must be fortified with a vitamin-mineral premix containing two vitamins: B12 and B9, and two minerals: zinc and iron. The iron form prescribed by the standard is NaFeEDTA (EDTA iron).

However, since its adoption, the progress in the implementation of the law has been sub-optimal. Past experiences with the implementation of fortification efforts in the country reveal various challenges that should be avoided when implementing a new fortification law.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128028612000018>

For example, several challenges were encountered when the Universal Salt Iodization programme was being implemented in 2012, including limited enforcement and monitoring frameworks, lack of consumer awareness, and limited implementation capacity of the private sector producers and the technical agencies for food safety and quality control. Thus, to accelerate the implementation of the flour fortification law, integrated action between the relevant stakeholders from the private sector, government, and civil society is essential. Effective implementation can occur when all food systems actors, from production/import, storage, processing, retail and markets, and consumption, make concerted efforts.

With the goal of advancing wheat flour fortification in the country, The World Food Programme (WFP) Tajikistan undertook a situational analysis of the status of wheat flour fortification in the country and proposes a way forward to ensure compliance with the mandatory wheat flour fortification law. As part of this assessment, a wide range of stakeholders were consulted, and site visits were conducted to wheat flour mills to understand the status of compliance and the availability of necessary equipment to commence wheat flour fortification. The assessment particularly focused on wheat flour fortification as it is the main staple food of the population in Tajikistan.

## Assessment Methodology

The assessment followed a structured research process, as described below:

1. Project Plan
  - WFP engaged a global expert in fortification to lead the study. Internal discussions were held to better understand the context, objectives, and expectations of the assessment.
  - A project plan was prepared.
2. Secondary Research: Available literature was reviewed, including research papers, development partners' reports, and project reports from previous pilots conducted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), WFP, etc., to analyse the current wheat flour fortification situation in Tajikistan and progress made.
3. Primary Research
  - A list of entities and corresponding respondents were identified through an iterative process.
    - The literature reviewed during the secondary research step helped identify gaps in information and implementation as well as key stakeholders from the government and flour milling industry that could provide valuable input.
    - The websites of multiple millers were mined to find important details, such as their milling capacity, their production levels, etc. Subsequently, the millers were classified based on their production capacities.
    - A list of relevant stakeholders was created, and additional desk research was conducted to prepare a list of the key individuals within these organizations.

- The key individuals were contacted, and detailed interviews were conducted. To ensure the diversity of opinions and an equitable representation of views, individuals from the government as well as the private sector were contacted.
- During the initial interviews, respondents referred several additional experts, who were subsequently interviewed.
- When necessary, follow up discussions were held with respondents to obtain clarity on the points discussed.
- The discussions provided:
  - An understanding of the status of wheat flour fortification in Tajikistan and gaps in our knowledge of the industry and ecosystem.
  - First-hand insight from stakeholders on the barriers to large-scale wheat flour fortification.
  - An understanding of the constraints of different stakeholders and the possible actions that could help reduce or remove some of the barriers.

A list of interviewed stakeholders is provided below.

**Table 1: Relevant government and private-sector stakeholders**

<b>Sr. No</b>	<b>Organization</b>
1	Sughd Millers Association
2	LLC "Sughd Pack" www.sugdpack.tj
3	The Centre of Tojikstandard, Khujand, Sughd
4	LLC "Khubjam Invest" / TMK / "Anhor" Khujand, Sughd
5	LLC "AJR", B. Gafurov district, Khujand, Tajikistan
6	LLC "Ordi Fatir", B. Gafurov district, Khujand, Tajikistan
7	LLC "Zernovaya Kompaniya" (ZK), 64 K. Khobilov Street, B. Gafurov district, Khujand Tajikistan. www.buona.tj
8	State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service, Khujand, Sughd, Tajikistan
9	WFP mini bakery, Near Trading Centre "Sitorai Shark"
10	CJSC "Obi Zulol", Tajikistan
11	Dushanbe milling companies, LLC "Kombinati Ordi Dushanbe", Dushanbe, Tajikistan
12	Hexagon Nutrition, LLC, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
13	Central Project Implementation Bureau, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
14	Scientific and Production Centre "Donmahsulotlari", Tashkent, Uzbekistan
15	UNICEF Uzbekistan
16	UNICEF Tajikistan
17	USAID Tajikistan
18	Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population Dushanbe, Tajikistan
19	Republican Nutrition Centre under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
20	Ministry of Industry and New Technology, Dushanbe, Tajikistan



21	Agency of Standardization, Metrology, Certification, and Trade Inspection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
22	Food Safety Committee under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
23	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

## Situational Analysis

### **Regulatory framework**

Following Tajikistan’s parliamentary approval and the president’s signing of the mandatory wheat flour fortification law in 2019, three official documents were produced by the Government of Tajikistan: (1) a fortification standards document issued by the Agency of Standardization, Metrology, Certification and Trade Inspection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (Tojikstandard) at the end of 2019; (2) a 15-page technical regulations document in September 2021; and (3) a document entitled “The Programme for Prevention of Micronutrient Deficiency and Related Diseases Among the Population in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period of 2022-2027” at the end of 2021. These three documents took effect through presidential proclamations.

As of the end of April 2022, the Fortification Working Group, under the Republican Nutrition Centre within the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSPP), was developing an “Instructional Manual on Flour Fortification” at the mill level, which will also become a legal document through proclamation.

### **Wheat flour milling industry infrastructure**

Tajikistan’s milling companies import approximately 1 million tons of wheat per year from Kazakhstan, which produces roughly 750,000 tons of flour. A declining share of Tajikistan’s annual wheat crop of 800,000 tons is used for human consumption.

Domestic production accounts for over 90 percent of flour consumption, which means that fortification of domestic wheat flour alone would provide more than adequate population coverage. Village-milled flour continues to decline as a share of total consumption, which is also beneficial for achieving a greater share of fortified flour consumption, as the village-level flour mills lack the infrastructure and means to fortify wheat flour and ensure quality control of fortified wheat flour. Approximately 80,000 tons of flour were imported, almost exclusively from Kazakhstan, in 2021.

There are over 50 private and public sector, large and medium-sized flour production companies currently operating in Tajikistan. However, Tajikistan’s milling industry is highly consolidated, with the four (4) largest companies operating six (6) milling plants that collectively account for roughly 60 percent of domestic flour output. The three (3) largest wheat flour millers are in the Sughd region and the fourth is in Dushanbe. Nationally, about

3,000 tons of wheat are milled daily, with the top millers accounting for 30 percent. Such industry concentration is an advantage for the implementation of fortification since there are a limited number of companies with which to work.

There are currently three (3) main Government-owned flour mills in Tajikistan that are under the Agency on State Material Reserves of the Republic of Tajikistan (Gosreserv), the strategic grain reserve organization. These mills are located in Rasht (Districts of Republican Subordination), Shahri Sarband (Khatlon region), and Khorog (Gorno Badakshan Autonomous Oblast). These mills process wheat imported by Gosreserv from Kazakhstan. The mill in Rasht produces flour for subsidized distribution to the local population in an area where no wheat is grown, while the other two (2) mentioned mills mainly process flour for distribution to institutional users, such as the military, police, and hospitals. Total Gosreserv flour output in 2021 was 6,110 tons, which is less than 1 percent of the total for the country. The total annual wheat milling capacity of the three (3) mills is 44,000 tons, meaning a capacity utilization rate of less than 20 percent. There is no public data on the size of the government’s strategic wheat reserves.

Among all mills in the country, there is 9,000 tons of daily wheat milling capacity but only 3,000 tons are needed to meet domestic flour demand. At least two-thirds of the milling companies that were in operation five (5) years ago have stopped producing due to extreme price competition and difficulties with wheat supply. The largest flour producers are mostly part of diversified business groups, which provides them the financial strength to import wheat from Kazakhstan.

Despite the introduction of the mandatory wheat flour fortification law, and the wheat flour milling industry being conducive to fortification, wheat flour is not currently being fortified by any of the country’s millers. To begin fortifying wheat flour, milling companies must (1) install micro feeders; (2) ensure a sustainable and good quality supply of premix; (3) train personnel on using the micro feeders to dose the premix to the flour; and (4) conduct internal quality control. To date, none of the top wheat flour millers possess the infrastructure needed to comply with the fortification law. A list of the top wheat flour millers, their market share, and whether they possess the equipment needed for fortification is provided below:

**Table 2: Top Tajikistan milling companies**

Company	Location	Number of plants	Capacity (tons per day)	National market share	Fortification infrastructure
LLC “Khubjam Invest” / TMK / “Anhor”	Khujand	2 functional (2 other plants not operating)	1,100 (TMK 600 / Anhor 500)	30%	No micro feeder nor premix
LLC “Ordi Fatir”	Khujand and Guliston	2 (including a new pasta plant)	420 (Khujand 180 / Guliston 240)	15%	No micro feeder nor premix
LLC “Zernovaya Kompaniya”	Khujand	1	420	7%	2 micro feeders on

		(2 milling lines and pasta plant)			large milling line
LLC “Ordi Dushanbe” / Avesto Group	Dushanbe	1 (other plant in the south not operating)	300	5%	2 micro feeders
LLC “Ghallai Sugd”	Khujand	New mill is under construction	220	0%	
TOTAL			2,460	57%	

Source: Industry interviews and researcher estimates

### Compliance monitoring: inspection and testing

Tojikstandard and the MoHSPP’s State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service (SES) are two (2) primary regulatory agencies responsible for monitoring the compliance of the mandatory wheat flour fortification law. Tojikstandard receives flour samples from each milling company every three (3) months. These samples are currently tested for compliance with national standards for gluten and moisture. Milling companies are required to send copies of the compliance certificates to their customers with each shipment, and flour vendors must have the certificates available to present to government inspectors from SES.

Currently, no compliance monitoring of the wheat flour milling industry is being conducted to monitor the implementation of and compliance with the fortification law, though two (2) national laboratories have the required equipment to do so. Tojikstandard laboratories in Sughd region and Dushanbe have atomic absorption spectrophotometers (AAS) suitable for accurate quantitative testing of both iron and zinc, the two (2) minerals in fortified wheat flour, though Tojikstandard in Sughd region reports difficulty in finding pure acetylene gas needed for its AAS. The two (2) AASs were donated as part of the USAID-funded GAIN project in 2017, but since no enforcement was ordered after the adoption of the law, neither instrument has been functional, and both are lying idle. Further, with the President’s decree of a moratorium on government inspections until the end of 2022, compliance monitoring of wheat flour fortification has been hindered.

The country’s flour production companies are not well-informed about the actual cost of premix and the procedure for compliance with the law. Due to government enforcement efforts being slow, the major milling companies seem to lack a sense of urgency to understand the procedures and comply with the flour fortification law.

Premix supply also seems to be a challenge for the flour millers. During the assessment, several millers pointed to the difficulty and expense of procuring vitamin and mineral premix as a reason for not initiating wheat flour fortification. Tajikistan milling companies unanimously rejected the idea of a central procurement entity to import and supply them with premix, since it would only increase the cost and time involved in buying premix. Most of the milling companies are already in touch with one leading premix supplier. A new premix

production plant in Tashkent should be able to meet the premix requirements of the Tajikistan millers.

### **Stakeholders and partners**

Many government agencies and local and international organizations have played a role in various flour fortification projects and initiatives in Tajikistan during the past 20 years.

Since the end of the USAID-funded GAIN project in 2017, and the adoption of the mandatory wheat flour fortification law in 2019, no single organization or government agency has taken a sufficiently strong leadership role to advance the fortification agenda to the point where enforcement can take place. In addition, there has been a lack of consistent funding for fortification activities in the country.

The need for the involvement of stakeholders in flour fortification programming is more urgent than ever. With the adoption of the fortification law, Tajikistan is at the cusp of transforming its food fortification landscape. For the flour fortification initiative to be successful, all relevant stakeholders must work in close partnership and complement each other's flour fortification activities. A formal structure of partnership with a clearly outlined scope of work among partners would strengthen advocacy and bring synergy in approach between stakeholders to scale up wheat flour fortification.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The current assessment of wheat flour fortification in Tajikistan demonstrates that flour fortification has come a long way from the first pilot that was initiated in early 2000 to the passing of the mandatory wheat flour fortification law in 2019. However, much is still left to do for wheat flour fortification to be successfully and sustainably implemented in Tajikistan. The main reason for the lack of progress is the lack of a common technical understanding among stakeholders of how to operationalize the mandatory wheat flour fortification law. A multi-pronged approach must be deployed by simultaneously engaging multiple stakeholders to address implementation bottlenecks at multiple levels.

The relevant stakeholders can be broadly divided into three (3) categories: (a) government stakeholders, (b) private sector and nongovernmental stakeholders, and (c) development partners. The stakeholders within each category are as follows:

- a. Government stakeholders** (*in alphabetical order*)
  - Agency of State Material Reserves (Gosreserv)
  - Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population
  - Ministry of Industry and New Technologies
  - State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service (under the MoHSPP)
  - Tojikstandard

**b. Private sector and nongovernmental stakeholders** *(in alphabetical order)*

- Civil society
- Consumer unions
- International nongovernmental organizations
- Premix suppliers
- Wheat flour mills

**c. Development partners** *(in alphabetical order)*

- Asian Development Bank
- European Union
- Food Fortification Advisory Services
- UN agencies
- USAID
- World Bank

To ensure the successful implementation of the mandatory wheat flour fortification law, a phased approach to scaling up wheat flour fortification must be adopted in Tajikistan with short, medium, and long-term plans for both the government and private sector stakeholders.

In the short-term, the focus should be on ensuring increased production and quality assurance of fortified wheat flour and capacity building of both government and private sector stakeholders. At this stage, following the adoption of the mandatory wheat fortification law, the role of government in ensuring the smooth implementation and enforcement of the law becomes critical. Accordingly, with leading technical and capacity building support provided by WFP, below are specific actions and recommendations that should be followed by stakeholders in the short-term:

- The government agencies should address the limitations of the existing mandatory wheat flour fortification law by: (1) setting standards for premix, flour bag markings, and fortification logo use, (2) strengthening laboratory infrastructure, and (3) monitoring compliance.
- A dedicated inter-ministerial government technical working group should be established with a clear high-level mandate and clear roles, responsibilities, and deliverables to expedite the enforcement of the mandatory wheat flour fortification law.
- Efforts should initially be focused on ensuring that the six (6) large-scale wheat flour mills, which have approximately 60 percent of the market share, start fortifying their wheat flour in accordance with the fortification law.
- To ensure the sustainable scale-up of flour fortification efforts in Tajikistan, the government agencies, particularly Tojikstandard and SES, must use their existing tools to enforce

fortification. As an immediate step, each agency could begin with simple enforcement after first giving notice to the flour mills.

- Tojikstandard can test the content of flour samples received every three (3) months from milling companies and include iron testing in the Certificates of Compliance. The technical support required for Tojikstandard to conduct iron testing and ensure compliance with fortification standards can be provided by technical partners, including WFP.
- SES issues “Permission to Work” certificates to new food processing plants based on an inspection of the plant and its processing equipment. In the case of flour mills, SES should adopt a policy whereby “Permission to Work” certificates are not issued unless micro feeders are installed, and an adequate supply of premix is on hand with written procedures for its use and internal quality control. Furthermore, the “Permission to Work” certificates of existing milling companies should be amended after an inspection is conducted to assess whether they meet the above requirements.
- The enforcement of the mandatory wheat flour fortification law should be monitored with engagement and support from consumer protection organizations. These organizations can provide the consumer perspective and sensitize the government and private sector stakeholders on the public health importance of flour fortification.
- The Ministry of Industry and New Technology should work closely with Gosreserv to facilitate the adoption of wheat flour fortification, by equipping the public sector flour mills with the necessary infrastructure to commence wheat flour fortification. The commencement of wheat flour fortification in the public sector flour mills will have a positive impact on the private wheat flour mills by demonstrating a strong commitment by the Government of Tajikistan to implement the flour fortification law.
- A national-level roundtable seminar with the private sector and government stakeholders should be organized to understand the current progress on wheat flour fortification, understand the challenges faced by the private sector in implementing flour fortification, and develop a clear roadmap for implementing fortification moving forward.
- Following the seminar, a South-South and Triangular Cooperation visit to Uzbekistan should be organized for select government and private sector partners including premix suppliers. Uzbekistan has been able to successfully scale up wheat flour fortification and can therefore provide valuable lessons learned to Tajikistan.

In the medium and long term, with support from WFP, the government and private sector stakeholders should work towards expanding production capacity for fortified wheat flour by engaging with small and medium-sized enterprises to broaden the reach of fortified wheat flour among vulnerable groups. In addition, efforts should be made to support the capacity building of private sector players to produce and supply premix domestically.



The success of wheat flour fortification in Tajikistan will depend on the commitment of the government and private sector flour mills, and the technical assistance and capacity-building support provided by technical partners in the coming months and years. The country has the potential to scale up flour fortification but will need support over the next 2 to 3 years to ensure that nutritionally vulnerable communities have sustained access to fortified wheat flour that is safe, nutritious, and affordable. Partnerships among Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network, GAIN, USAID, UNICEF, and the Government of Tajikistan will be critical to advance wheat flour fortification.

The public health and nutrition challenges in Tajikistan call for immediate action to scale up wheat flour fortification to address micronutrient deficiency in the country.