



Building
Nutritious
Food Baskets

FARA
Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa



Building Nutritious Food Basket Project regional advocacy strategy, 2017 and beyond

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Building Nutritious Food Baskets Project: Regional advocacy strategy, 2017 and beyond

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1. Background and rationale

Malnutrition in all its forms continues to be a problem in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The number of stunted children under five years of age in SSA rose by 23% from 42 million in 1990 to 58 million in 2014 (UNICEF et al., 2015). Micronutrient deficiency or hidden hunger, which is characterized by chronic deficiency in essential vitamins and minerals such as vitamin A, iron, zinc and iodine, affects millions of people in SSA, especially the rural poor and other vulnerable populations. Most women of reproductive age, infants and young children in SSA countries suffer from deficiencies in vitamin A, iodine, iron, zinc and folate (Nordin et al., 2013; Black et al., 2008). Children under five years are particularly susceptible, with high mortality rates, birth defects, anaemia, blindness, wasting, stunting and cognitive defects (Alderman et al., 2006). In Africa, the prevalence of stunting in children under five years rose from 50.4% in 2000 to 58.5% in 2015. Some 14.1 million children in that age group are wasted, 4.3 million of them severely (UNICEF et al., 2016). An estimated 48% of preschool age children in SSA are vitamin A deficient and 24% of all child deaths are attributable to that deficiency (UNICEF, 2014). In 2011, 29% (496 million) of non-pregnant women and 38% (32.4 million) of pregnant women aged 15–49 years were anaemic (Stevens et al., 2013). The prevalence of anaemia was highest in South Asia and Central and West Africa in 2011 (Stevens et al., 2013). According to the 2016 Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Index (HANCI) Report on Africa, progress towards attaining the World Health Organization's (WHO) global target of reducing iron deficiency by 50% by 2025 has been negligible and none of the 54 countries in Africa is on target to meet it.

Vitamin A and iron deficiencies are the most common micronutrient deficiencies with public health implications. In SSA vitamin A deficiency is the result of inadequate dietary intake of the primary sources of this micronutrient, which are yellow and orange fruits and vegetables and dark green leafy vegetables. The consequences of vitamin A deficiency include a high risk of diseases such as diarrhoea and measles, growth retardation and premature death for children under five, weakened immune system, visual impairment, and blindness. While there are various causes of anaemia, it is estimated that iron deficiency is responsible for half of the cases (WHO, 2014). Iron deficiency anaemia impairs the health of women of child-bearing age and young children. Other important causes of anaemia worldwide include infections; malaria; other nutritional deficiencies, especially folate and vitamins A, B12 and C; and genetic conditions, including sickle cell disease.

The efforts to address the prevailing micronutrient malnutrition in SSA include supplementation programs that provide iron and vitamin A capsules to women of reproductive age and children under the age of five years through the health sector. Even where supplementation coverage is high, it targets only the most vulnerable groups, yet micronutrient deficiencies are of public health significance and the entire population needs to have access to adequate micronutrients. Food-based approaches for addressing micronutrient malnutrition have so far been largely limited to commercial food fortification of salt with iodine; cooking oil, sugar and margarine with vitamin A; and flour and maize meal with iron and B vitamins. The coverage of fortified foods is dependent on how developed the market infrastructure is. In SSA many rural communities have limited access to commercially processed or fortified foods, and locally processed and unfortified foods are often more readily available and cheaper. The promotion of dietary diversification, nutrition-sensitive food production systems and nutrition education has not received the focus and sustained attention necessary to effect sustainable behaviour change.

Biofortification provides an additional approach for addressing micronutrient malnutrition and is a strategy that has the potential to reach the remote rural areas not easily reached by the other initiatives. Biofortification is the process of boosting the nutritional value of food crops by increasing their density of vitamins and minerals through conventional plant breeding, agronomic practices or biotechnology (BNFB, 2016). Examples of vitamins and minerals that can be increased through biofortification include pro-vitamin A carotenoids, zinc and iron.

2. Goal and objectives of BNFB

The Building Nutritious Food Baskets (BNFB) Project is testing a model to scale up biofortified crops for nutrition security initially in Nigeria and Tanzania. The three-year project builds on the achievements, successes and scaling up approaches of the Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) Project. It broadens its focus from the orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) promoted under RAC to adopt a multi-crop or food basket approach consisting of biofortified high iron beans, pro-vitamin A (orange) maize, OFSP and yellow cassava.

The goal of BNFB is to help reduce hidden hunger by catalysing sustainable investments in the utilization of biofortified staple crops at scale in Nigeria and Tanzania. The purpose is to demonstrate how this can be achieved through structured partnerships involving a range of CGIAR centres and programs as well as subnational, national, regional and international stakeholders. The partners will leverage proven strengths to deliver on the specific project aspects of advocacy, policy development, nutrition education and behaviour change communication. That way, they will jointly contribute to creating demand for the biofortified crops, strengthening the capacities of the key actors in the crops' value chains and facilitating institutional learning, all of which are needed to take multiple biofortified crops to scale. The project has two specific objectives: to strengthen the enabling environment for investments in biofortified crops and to strengthen institutional and community capabilities to produce and consume biofortified crops.

BNFB brings together six mutually complementing partners, i.e. the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, the International Potato Center (CIP), the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, HarvestPlus and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA). FARA's role in the project is policy engagement and advocacy coordination at the regional level.

2.1 BNFB project outputs for FARA to deliver

- The regional advocacy strategy developed and implemented;
- Advocacy and communication materials developed and disseminated;
- Capacity of advocacy champions developed and supported for continued advocacy for biofortification at regional and country levels;
- Biofortification mainstreamed in at least three regional agricultural strategies or plans;
- At least three new programs on biofortification initiated in Nigeria and Tanzania;
- At least USD 10 million raised for biofortification in Nigeria and Tanzania.

2.2 Definition of advocacy in the context of BNFB

FARA and the BNFB advocacy team understand advocacy in the context of BNFB as a strategic set of activities designed to influence decision-makers, laws and regulations, strategies and practices to address the root causes of micronutrient deficiency. Advocacy may be carried out publicly or privately and can include policy research, campaigning and public events, lobbying and policy dialog, media work, and production and dissemination of materials to support the different types of activities. Awareness raising is part of advocacy when it is seeking to educate people and increase understanding on issues of micronutrient malnutrition. FARA will use different advocacy methods as appropriate to the BNFB team and their contexts and that are the most effective to achieve the desired policy or practice change.

3. Objectives and targets of the BNFB regional advocacy strategy

BNFB's regional advocacy strategy aims to use available evidence to influence Africa-wide, regional and subregional decision-makers, planners and donors to adopt and invest in biofortified crops as part of a comprehensive package of strategies to address the main micronutrient deficiencies in the continent. A regional advocacy strategy needs to capitalize on the strengths existing at the regional and subregional levels. The strategy needs to adopt a holistic approach in its efforts to promote investments in biofortification and, in particular, in vitamin A cassava, maize and OFSP, and high iron beans. It should closely align itself with the ongoing initiatives for improving food and nutrition security in Africa and the prevailing policy environment as enunciated by key regional bodies such as the African Union (AU) and its implementing agency, the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Furthermore, weaknesses should be identified and considered, and approaches devised to minimize them. The threats to the scaling up of biofortification should also be factored into the regional advocacy strategy.

The strategy focuses on three broad objectives:

- Influence regional and subregional organizations to incorporate biofortification into policies and strategies to address micronutrient deficiencies;
- Promote investments in biofortified crops to address micronutrient (especially vitamin A and iron) deficiencies in SSA through regional and subregional organizations, donors, NGOs and the private sector;
- Create demand for comprehensive solutions to the micronutrient problem.

4. Components of the advocacy strategy

4.1 Strategic objective 1: Influence regional and subregional organizations to incorporate biofortification into policies and strategies to address micronutrient deficiencies

4.1.1 Key issues

There exist enabling policy environments at the regional level but the policies are fragmented and the organizations relevant to food and nutrition often do not speak to one another. An opportunity exists to influence the ongoing development of regional policies and strategies in the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to include biofortification and nutrition-sensitive agriculture guidelines and initiatives. Similarly, the expiry of the AU Strategic Plan this year creates an opportunity to inform the development and review of its new version.

Generally, there is recognition of the importance of advocacy at the institutional level as evidenced by the establishment of high level panels and platforms and appointment of champions. Moreover, quality advocacy material and tools are becoming increasingly available; for example, the advocacy materials RAC produced are still in use. These efforts notwithstanding, there are weaknesses in advocacy initiatives. These include the lack of a coherent narrative on micronutrient malnutrition on which to pin biofortification advocacy and communication; haphazard, fragmented and transitory advocacy efforts; inadequate targeting of farmers' associations; and the existence of too many actors at the regional level operating in an uncoordinated manner. Several developments have opened up opportunities for BNFB advocacy. These include the assembling of the new advocacy champions and initiatives such as the African Leaders for Nutrition, the newly introduced nutrition-related tools including the cost of hunger studies and the Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Index, and the newly identified targets for advocacy and communication efforts. These targets include the

school feeding programs, which are receiving a fresh focus through AU's Home-grown School Feeding Programme, and farmer organizations, which have not previously been engaged in regional advocacy efforts. Under strategic objective 1, advocacy efforts will aim to generate the following outcomes:

- Regional policy and strategy coherence and institutional arrangements that facilitate a multisectoral response to the prevailing food and nutrition issues;
- Sustained food and nutrition awareness of relevant policy-makers to take up their leadership role in directing this important agenda;
- Development by the AU/NEPAD and the regional economic communities of a comprehensive strategy for addressing micronutrient malnutrition through a food-based approach that includes biofortification, to tackle the current fragmented nature of the continental and regional bodies' response to micronutrient malnutrition;
- Mainstreaming of biofortification issues into the second generation regional and national agricultural investment plans;
- Stimulating the development of policies and mechanisms for cross-sector interventions on biofortification such as interventions that bring together the agriculture, nutrition and health sectors.

4.1.2 Implementation strategy

FARA will be supported by a team of regional advocacy champions made up of respected professionals who are influential and well respected in their regions. These champions will be assigned to participate in strategic regional meetings and events on behalf of BNFB. Such meetings will include the Comprehensive Agenda on Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) annual roundtable, the CAADP Partnership Platform, the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa regional consultation, the African Day for Food and Nutrition Security events, and the Global Panel meetings. The BNFB advocacy team will use appropriate advocacy materials during key speeches and resolutions at relevant high level meetings of regional organizations such as AU, ECOWAS, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), NEPAD and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to expand awareness and understanding on biofortification and to call for its inclusion in interventions to address micronutrient deficiencies. Such materials will include policy briefs, fact sheets, banners, success stories, videos and statements.

Working through the BNFB regional champions and other African high level nutrition champions, the advocates will target strategic change agents and key policy-makers in the targeted regional and subregional organizations including AU, NEPAD, COMESA, ECOWAS and SADC who have influence over the implementation of strategic regional policies. The key policies and strategic documents of interest include the African Union Commission (AUC) strategic plan for 2018 and beyond (i.e. 2018+) and the strategies of ECOWAS, SADC, EAC and other subregional bodies, the Technologies for African Agriculture Transformation (TAAT) program, and the African Agricultural Research Programme. Emphasis will be on national and regional policies for food and nutrition, agriculture, gender and social development, and food safety, as well as food laws and regulations.

4.2 Strategic objective 2: Promote investments in biofortified crops to address micronutrient (especially vitamin A and iron) deficiencies in SSA through regional and subregional organizations, donors, NGOs and the private sector

4.2.1 Key issues

Policy decisions adopted at the regional level to integrate nutrition into national agriculture investment plans will ensure sustainable investment prospects. Also, there are several investments in nutrition-sensitive agriculture initiatives by the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID), a development partner, and AU and ECOWAS. The availability of the investment guide developed for OFSP under RAC will facilitate investment in OFSP, and the guide can be adapted for use with the other biofortified crops. The main drawback is the fact that currently investment in food-based approaches and nutrition-sensitive agriculture is largely donor supported. It is expected, however, that the new investment opportunities through TAAT and the Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa, which is a partnership of SSA countries and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, as well as AU's quest to have funding for programming obtained from domestic sources, will and should see the prioritization of investment in food and agriculture in the region. Furthermore, farmer organizations, which are rarely engaged at the regional level, now form new and sustainable targets as sources of investment. The national agriculture investment plans developed under CAADP outline clearly the countries' investment priorities and provide guidance for investment in food and nutrition and nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

Adequate technical capacity exists for the development of biofortified crops, mainly coming through the strong participation of the CGIAR centers. Also, institutions such as FARA, the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern Central and Africa (ASARECA), the West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) and the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern (CCARDESA), as well as agricultural research and innovation institutes, are participating in research and promotion of biofortified crops. However, practical and effective advocacy skills and knowledge in tools for monitoring and evaluating advocacy activities are inadequate in most of these institutions, as are funds allocated for advocacy and communication. At the national level the capacity to move the biofortification agenda through the value chains of the biofortified crops is limited, and biofortification research and promotional activities are largely dependent on external funding. There is therefore a need to strengthen the capacity of the regional champions and advocates to effectively advocate for increased research and investment in biofortification and greater utilization and consumption of biofortified crops in SSA. The funding challenge can be partly addressed with the coming on board of new funding sources such as the Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa, TAAT and the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the CGIAR are developing electronic courses in nutrition and agriculture to enhance the technical capacities of food and nutrition practitioners. The key outcomes expected under strategic objective 2 are:

- Identification of domestic resources for food and nutrition in general, riding on the current efforts of AU to find sustainable mechanisms to support its work by identifying domestic resources;
- Meaningful and regular joint engagement of policy-makers in the agriculture, health and finance sectors;
- Incorporation of food-based approaches, including biofortification, into the national agriculture investment plans for increased resource allocation from national budgets;
- Meaningful engagement of the private sector players such as farmers and food industry actors as advocates for the production and use of biofortified crops;
- Capacity development in practical and effective advocacy skills and in tools for monitoring and evaluating advocacy activities;
- Prioritizing advocacy and communication on the use of food-based approaches, including biofortification to address micronutrient malnutrition in regional, national and project budgets.

4.2.2 Implementation strategy

For increased investments in biofortified crops:

- Identify funding opportunities that are available for food and nutrition security programs in the region and facilitate BNFB's national level advocacy efforts to have increased investments in biofortification by its inclusion in proposals directed at such funding opportunities. Several multi-donor trust funds are being established to support agriculture in Africa, some of which are already active and have targeted the BNFB countries;
- Provide guidance or guidelines on how to invest in biofortified crops through their value chains and facilitate the regional economic communities and the countries to incorporate food-based approaches to address micronutrient deficiencies in national agriculture investment plans;
- Organize a donor/development partner roundtable linked to the CAADP Partnership Platform forum.

For enhanced capacity for advocacy:

- Develop the capacity of the regional advocacy champions and representatives of regional and subregional organizations in advocacy skills and in the tools for monitoring advocacy activities;
- Establish a multi-stakeholder platform such as the BNFB D-Group that will provide feedback and information on food-based approaches, new biofortification-related initiatives and innovations to update available information and inform the advocacy strategy.

4.3 Strategic objective 3: Create demand for comprehensive solutions to the micronutrient problem

4.3.1 Key issues

BNFB can take advantage of the existence of a large proportion of pilot initiatives supported by development partners such as the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID), USAID, Helen Keller International, World Vision International, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the International Food Policy Research Institute. Also, nutrition-sensitive agriculture is institutionalized in regional and national policies and strategies through CAADP, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, the Second International Conference on Nutrition, the African Regional Nutrition Strategy and other initiatives. However, often these initiatives receive minimal domestic investment and rely mostly on external funding, which is not sustainable. Another challenge is that the narrative and guidelines on food-based approaches and nutrition-sensitive agriculture are limited in both content and availability, which has delayed the translation of policies on food-based approaches and nutrition-sensitive agriculture into actions. Furthermore, evidence from previous pilot initiatives has not been synthesized into implementation guidelines. However, the newly developed nutrition-sensitive agriculture toolkit of FAO provides useful guidelines and recommendations. The great opportunities for BNFB project are the revision of the national agriculture investment plans that is going on, the numerous academic research platforms being established and the various pilots being evaluated for nutrition and health impact. The key issues of concern are the need to strengthen the evidence base to support the scaling up of food-based approaches, nutrition-sensitive agriculture and biofortification and to measure their impact on the micronutrient status of the population.

There is a growing catalogue of the SUN Movement's lessons that BNFB could adapt for use in its advocacy efforts. Lessons from RAC have been documented and can serve to guide the BNFB advocacy team. RAC developed investment and implementation guidelines to inform decisions on scaling up of OFSP, but such guidelines have not yet been developed for biofortified cassava, maize

or beans. Another challenge is the limited evidence-based data on prevalence of micronutrient malnutrition, particularly for vitamin A, and on the proportion of anaemia that can be attributable to iron deficiency. Current monitoring and evaluation data collection systems do not adequately accommodate biofortification and micronutrients, denying them a supportive evidence base and making it difficult to facilitate and justify the scaling up of biofortification. It is expected, however, that integrating nutrition into national agriculture investment plans will facilitate the scaling up of biofortification. The key outcomes expected under this objective are:

- Development of guidelines for nutrition-sensitive agriculture initiatives;
- Strengthening the evidence base to support the scaling up of food-based approaches to tackling micronutrient deficiencies and the measuring of their impact;
- Demand creation for biofortified crops among farmers, consumers and the new initiatives such as the home-grown school feeding programs and food-based social safety nets. The partners at country level can handle this component, and emanating lessons can be leveraged to inform the regional level advocacy;
- Accelerated development of food-based guidelines by the countries to inform their selection of healthy diets that include biofortified crops;
- Regular sharing of knowledge generated from the nutrition-sensitive agriculture pilot programs to facilitate the scaling up of food-based approaches to tackling micronutrient deficiencies.

4.3.2 Implementation strategy

- Develop strategic partnerships and alliances with relevant organizations to facilitate BNFB activities;
- Capitalize on the visibility opportunities provided by the various multi-stakeholder consultations at country, subregional, regional and global levels such as CAADP, the SUN Movement, the Micronutrient Initiative and others to advocate for combating of hidden hunger and production and consumption of biofortified crops and foods;
- Engage regional media agencies to support the efforts to create awareness about the prevailing food and nutrition security situation and in particular vitamin A and iron deficiencies and the role that dietary diversity, including the use of biofortified crops, can play to address micronutrient malnutrition.
- Identify mechanisms for linking up with existing high profile African food and nutrition champions such as the former and the current presidents of Liberia, Mozambique and Tanzania, the president of the African Development Bank, the NEPAD chief executive officer and Graca Machel to raise awareness on the problem of micronutrient deficiency in SSA and how it could be addressed in a holistic manner that includes food-based approaches and promotion of biofortified staples;

5. Role of the regional advocacy champions

Considering the short duration of just three years that BNFB has, it was considered essential to identify a mechanism for advocacy that was already visible and in the forefront of the development agenda of the regional organizations and states in SSA. Thus, the CAADP process was identified as one of the vehicles for advocacy, as it is a mechanism that African countries have committed themselves to employ as a key strategy for agriculture-led economic growth.

BNFB was designed to take advantage of the regional advocacy champions, who would assist in advocacy activities. Hence, senior officials in selected regional and international organizations such as AU, NEPAD and FAO and subregional organizations were requested to become strategic regional advocates for biofortified crops. There was also the need to identify some independent and well-respected individuals with a wide range of experience in working with policy-makers at regional,

subregional and national levels. The enlisting of these persons brought the number of advocacy champions to 13. The desired qualities for the champions included:

- Influential individuals who were strategically placed within relevant organizations in the regions, who were passionate about biofortification or food-based approaches to malnutrition and were powerful within their organizations and sphere of operation to influence policy change and increase investment;
- Well-respected, high-profile individuals with good leadership abilities and skills as evidenced by their existing mandate and ongoing initiatives on food and nutrition security;
- Creative individuals with the potential to develop, implement or disseminate innovations on biofortification;
- Individuals with good communication and interpersonal skills.

The regional advocacy champions will operate from their organizations and present locations but may need to travel to other parts of Africa and the world when necessary. The champions will work with FARA and the BNFB team up to September 2018 when BNFB will end. However, FARA will continue to tap into the advocacy experiences of the champions even beyond the life of BNFB. To facilitate the work of the regional advocacy champions FARA and BNFB will be responsible for their:

- Capacity development in effective advocacy and the use of modern advocacy tools;
- Travel and accommodation to attend regional and subregional meetings when called upon by the regional advocacy coordinator;
- Advocacy materials such as banners, flyers, PowerPoint presentations, posters and branded souvenirs;
- Other logistical support as may be mutually agreed upon to ensure effective advocacy.

5.1 Scope of work of the regional advocacy champions

- Influence their organizations to increase their support for the biofortification agenda;
- Participate in the validation process for the regional situation analysis report in regard to the key institutions, policies and issues relevant for biofortification advocacy;
- Participate in the validation process for the BNFB draft advocacy strategy;
- Provide timely and strategic information on the opportunities for advocacy within the regional and subregional organizations, such as nutrition, agriculture and health meetings, events, conferences, conventions and planned policy engagements relevant for holistic and food-based approaches for addressing micronutrient malnutrition;
- Assist BNFB to navigate through the regional organizations and identify strategic advocacy opportunities and policy-makers;
- Assist FARA and the BNFB team to integrate/prioritize the biofortification agenda in key regional and subregional draft policies, strategies, plans and resolutions at the relevant subregional and regional forums;
- Represent BNFB and FARA at key regional events and advocate for biofortification;
- Actively participate in discussion groups such as the D-Group on Champions for Nutritious Foods in Africa;
- Provide feedback through, for example the D-Group, email and Skype meetings, on ongoing advocacy initiatives and policy engagement opportunities.

6. Targets for regional advocacy efforts

The BNFB regional advocacy strategy seeks to engage and influence key policy-makers and decision-makers in strategic regional and subregional organizations such as research and development organizations, professional organizations and donors.

6.1 Regional and subregional organizations

The regional and subregional organizations that will be the primary targets for the regional advocacy activities related to food-based approaches for tackling micronutrient deficiencies will be AU, COMESA, EAC, ECOWAS, NEPAD and SADC. The selection of these organizations was primarily determined by the fact that the two BNFB countries, Tanzania and Nigeria, were their members. Moreover, advocacy is required at the regional level to facilitate the scaling up of biofortified crops across the entire SSA region even after the BNFB project ends.

Regional organizations such as AU and NEPAD are an important target for this advocacy as they develop regional policies and strategies that influence and inform national policies and strategies on food and nutrition security in Africa. CAADP is the framework for agriculture development that member states of AU have agreed to employ in the development of their national agriculture investment plans. Furthermore, development partners are now channelling their support to countries for agriculture development through CAADP.

Subregional economic communities such as COMESA, EAC, ECOWAS and SADC are charged with the responsibility to support member states in the development of their national agriculture investment plans. Their appreciation of the role of comprehensive food-based approaches in the improvement of food and nutrition security would facilitate the integration of biofortified crops into diversified national food baskets and provide more options for meeting national nutrition requirements.

6.2 Research and development and academic organizations

Regional research organizations such as FARA and its various affiliates such as ASARECA, CCARDESA and CORAF bring together key stakeholders in agriculture research and development in Africa. FARA is committed to realizing the CAADP agenda in its role as the body designated by AU to coordinate research to support AU's agriculture-led development and to reduce food insecurity and poverty. FARA's proven support and commitment to research in biofortified crops, as evidenced by the work that was undertaken on OFSP by one of its institutions, ASARECA, makes it a good advocate at the regional level. One of FARA's strategic priorities emphasizes the creation of an enabling environment for increased and better harmonized investments in agriculture and agricultural research by national governments and regional and international development agencies and partners. This requires evidence-based advocacy among all stakeholders to provide them with viable options for improving policies, institutions and markets. The engagement of FARA to lead policy, engagement and advocacy, therefore, was well conceived. FARA and its related subregional institutions will need to continue to give attention to research into biofortified crops and will be targeted for increased investments in research on biofortified crops.

Academic organizations such as the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture can play a critical role in promoting and advocating for training of students in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and biofortification research. The Pan African University (PAU) was established and launched in 2011 following a decision by the assembly of heads of state and government of AU. PAU is a flagship continental initiative. Its statutes were adopted by the AU heads of state and government assembly in January 2013. The core mission of PAU aims at strengthening African higher education and research; producing a critical mass of high quality intellectual capital; making African higher education and research attractive, globally competitive, and locally relevant; and serving as a model for quality education development. Currently PAU is regarded as a major instrument for the implementation of several important programs including Agenda 2063 and the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024. PAU can be relevant for the biofortification advocacy efforts. The regional organizations should work with national universities and research institutions to scale up biofortification research. The involvement of research and academia is expected to result in

the incorporation of biofortification into curricula and the research agenda; motivation of students to do research in biofortified crop development, processing and product development and utilization; and increased intake of student champions as interns in relevant food and nutrition institutions and in field and practical exposure.

Africa has several professional organizations that could be mobilized to advocate for food-based approaches for tackling micronutrient deficiencies that include biofortified crops. The African Nutrition Society has an extensive network of professionals throughout the continent. It too will be targeted to facilitate debate and discussion and research on biofortified crops, as well as to promote and advocate for comprehensive strategies to combat key micronutrient deficiencies.

Regional health communities such as the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA) and WAHO are important strategic allies in advocating for countries to adopt a comprehensive approach to address nutritional problems, especially vitamin A and iron deficiencies. These health communities can also provide evidence on the impact of vitamin A and iron deficiency on morbidity, mortality and development.

6.3 Donors

There is need to identify current regional funding sources, donors and development partners, especially those that are targeting their support to the CAADP process, national agriculture investment plans and nutrition programs. An investment guide for biofortified crops also needs to be developed. The most cost-effective way to target donors would be through the biannual CAADP Partnership Platform forum workshops convened by AU. Donor roundtables and side events, as well as requests to be on the agenda of these groups' side meeting at the CAADP Partnership Platform forum workshops, will be the most viable and cost-effective options for BNFB, given its current engagement with the CAADP process at the regional level.

6.4 Civil society and development partners

NGOs, networks of NGOs including the SUN Civil Society Network, development partners, continent-wide farmer organizations and women farmer organizations will be targeted for advocacy activities. The objectives will be to influence their involvement and investments in nutrition advocacy and to promote dietary diversity, including the consumption of biofortified crops. The most efficient way to reach these stakeholders will be largely through the CAADP Partnership Platform forum workshops. Other regional and global meetings on agriculture, nutrition and health will also be explored as a means of reaching these important stakeholders.

6.5 Private sector

Agricultural and nutrition targets cannot be achieved by governments, the civil society and development partners alone; the private sector also has an important role to play in creating sustainable access to good nutrition for all. Generally there is increased recognition of the importance of private sector development for food and nutrition security, as highlighted in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation. However, to maximize the benefits of private sector investments for food and nutrition security in Africa, concerted efforts are needed. These efforts may include improving the business environment, which was also identified as a priority in the Malabo Declaration. Good governance policies and regulations that support private sector involvement in agriculture, access to finance, promotion of trade, investment in agriculture and women empowerment are crucial for improving nutrition around the world and should not be underestimated. Specifically, the private sector can play a key role by:

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- Investing in agriculture from seed development through to production of biofortified crops;
 - Investing in the supply chain;
 - Mobilization of private sector actors and resources, innovation, product development, manufacturing, and processing and delivery of safe and nutritious agricultural products, including biofortified food products.

Public–private partnerships are one key way by which the private sector is already improving nutrition. There is need to advocate for governments to create an enabling environment for biofortification and then allow the private sector to implement all the related activities. Many private sector organizations are committed to forging partnerships with public sector organizations to advocate for and deliver micronutrient-rich and nutritious foods to the populations at risk. In such partnerships some organizations will provide scientific and technical expertise, products or financial assistance, while for others the contribution will be in the form of establishing local stakeholder connections, providing food value chain knowledge or serving as part of a broad food distribution network. For example, in 2007, Royal DSM, a global, science-based company active in health and nutrition, and World Food Programme entered into a partnership to improve the nutritional intake of children under five years and pregnant and lactating women. By 2013 the partnership had reached 20.6 million people in Latin America, South Asia, Southeast Asia and SSA with improved food products such as micronutrient powders and fortified cereals. Similar partnerships can be forged to increase research, investments, processing and utilization of biofortified food products. Additionally, multi-stakeholder partnership approaches are widely recognized as necessary to increase the scope of financial and human resources to tackle nutritional challenges at a large scale. Partnerships of the private sector, governments and researchers have a critical role because they enable the generation of nutrition innovations and the creation of new tools for the actors working to improve nutrition.

To bridge the research–private sector gap and to ensure the increased use of research outputs and investment in agriculture by the private sector, the TAAT program offers a wide range of tested approaches to increase agricultural productivity and technology delivery. Through the TAAT program production technologies are tested and refined through on-farm activities that examine their application and appreciation by farmers. Once profitability is demonstrated, required production inputs are identified and commercialized by the private sector. Here again, TAAT presents opportunities for BNFB to work closely with the private sector to increase investment in and uptake of biofortified crops.

7. Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Monitoring and evaluation will be essential in objectively establishing progress towards the achievement of the objectives and in tracking the performance of the BNFB advocacy strategy. The BNFB strategy is dynamic, hence we need to monitor actions and evaluate their success, learn from evaluations and continue to plan and act. Monitoring and evaluation will provide the means for accountability and tracking of the delivery of results. It will also offer the tools for the collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of results to enhance learning.

Monitoring will entail regular collection and analysis of information during the implementation of the strategy to assist in timely decision making, ensure accountability and provide the basis for evaluation and learning. Ongoing monitoring will enable the regional advocacy coordinator and BNFB partners to take stock of the strategy implementation status and see if biofortification advocacy is proceeding according to plan or if changes need to be made. Monitoring will answer the question, “How are we doing?” The BNFB project manager will lead this process and will be assisted by the BNFB monitoring and evaluation officer and the regional advocacy coordinator. Regular meetings or teleconferences will be organized with the advocacy champions to obtain briefings on

the progress of the work. There will be need to plan a mid-term review following the rollout of the strategy as well as a final review.

Evaluation will focus on the impact of the advocacy activities and their outcomes. It will entail data collection at discrete points in time to systematically investigate the effectiveness of the regional advocacy activities in bringing about the desired changes in policies, strategies and investment plans. Evaluation will be used to answer the questions, “Did the expected change occur?”, “How much change occurred?” Evaluation will assess the implementation strategy and its success in achieving the stated advocacy objectives, using as a yardstick the success indicators in the implementation plan (see Appendix 1).

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Acronyms

AGRA	Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa
ARI	agricultural research and innovation
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern Central and Africa
AU	African Union
BNFB	Building Nutritious Food Baskets Project
CAADP	Comprehensive Agenda on Agricultural Development Programme
CCARDESA	Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa
CIMMYT	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center
CIP	International Potato Center
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CORAF	West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development
DFID	Department for International Development of the United Kingdom
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECSA	East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FARA	Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa
NEPAD	New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OFSP	orange-fleshed sweetpotato
PAU	Pan African University
RAC	Reaching Agents of Change Project
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SSA	sub-Saharan Africa
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
TAAT	Technologies for African Agriculture Transformation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAHO	West African Health Organisation
WHO	United Nations World Health Organization

Appendix 1: Implementation plan for 2017–2018 and beyond

Objective	BNFB output	Targets	Activities	Lead	Allies	Success indicators	Time scale
1. Influence regional and subregional organizations to incorporate biofortification into policies and strategies to address micronutrient deficiencies	Biofortification mainstreamed in at least 3 regional agricultural strategies or plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AU/NEPAD • SADC • ECOWAS • COMESA • Regional research institutions (FARA, CORAF, ASARECA, CCARDESA, etc). 	Participate in strategic subregional, regional and global meetings and policy dialog as opportunities for advocacy to influence policy revisions, and in side events and exhibitions	FARA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AU/NEPAD • FARA • COMESA • Regional economic communities (SADC, EAC, ECOWAS) • Relevant United Nations agencies (with FAO and WHO taking a lead role) and member states • BNFB project partners • SUN Movement • AGRA 	Inclusion of food-based approaches to addressing malnutrition and biofortification in relevant policy documents, strategies and speeches	By September 2018
			Establish strategic partnerships with regional organizations (AU and NEPAD) and subregional organizations to facilitate participation in policy and strategy forums	FARA, CIP, HarvestPlus		Speeches, policy and strategy documents of regional and subregional organizations mentioning food-based approaches and biofortification	Ongoing
			Develop stakeholder-specific advocacy materials on food-based approaches and biofortification to inform stakeholder agendas, programs and activities	FARA CIP		Advocacy materials developed and disseminated	By September 2018
			Organize one-on-one meetings with representatives of regional and subregional organizations to discuss modalities for facilitating mainstreaming of biofortification in policies	FARA		Meeting reports	Ongoing
			Assist regional and subregional organizations to draft or revise policy and strategy documents on food-based approaches to addressing malnutrition	FARA		Invitations to participate in regional policy formulation	Ongoing

Objective	BNFB output	Targets	Activities	Lead	Allies	Success indicators	Time scale
	Capacity of advocacy champions for continued advocacy for biofortification at regional and country levels developed and supported		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the champions and develop their terms of reference; Organize and conduct capacity building training workshop for the champions; Disseminate new information, evidence and innovations on biofortified crops obtained from the BNFB D-Group and other sources 	FARA		D-Group established and functioning	Ongoing
2. Promote investments in biofortified crops to address micronutrient (especially vitamin A and iron) deficiencies in SSA through regional and subregional organizations, donors, NGOs and the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 5 new programs on biofortification initiated in Nigeria and Tanzania At least USD 10 million raised for biofortification in Nigeria and Tanzania 	Regional and subregional organizations (AU, COMESA, EAC, ECOWAS, NEPAD, SADC) supporting countries to develop agriculture investment plans	Organize and coordinate meetings with key policy-makers and advocate for promotion and investment in biofortified staple crops to facilitate investments in the crops	FARA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional economic communities CAADP Partnership Platform HarvestPlus Professional associations (e.g. African Nutrition Society) Helen Keller International WAHO NEPAD Relevant United Nations agencies such as FAO World Vision International USAID, with Africare as the implementing partner FANRPAN Initiative for Food and Nutrition in Africa TAAT New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (a G8, African governments and private sector initiative) 	Investments in biofortified crops included in agriculture investment plans through the value chain	Ongoing
			Provide guidelines to regional economic communities and nutrition ambassadors on how to incorporate food-based approaches for addressing malnutrition and biofortification into national agriculture investment plans at the subregional and regional levels	FARA BNFB Advocacy Champions CIP		Guidelines developed	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FARA CORAF ASARECA CCARDESA CGIAR centers, Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture PAU etc. 	Include regional research and academic institutions in the BNFB D-Group	FARA CIP		Membership of research institutions in BNFB D-Group confirmed	By June 2018
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African Development Bank Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation DFID etc. 	Arrange donor roundtable meeting	FARA HarvestPlus		Meeting reports	Dependent on NEPAD, AU and other regional organizations'

Objective	BNFB output	Targets	Activities	Lead	Allies	Success indicators	Time scale
		Regional private sector organizations and NGOs working with smallholder farmers, especially women	Organize meetings and side events e.g. during CAADP public-private workshops and nutrition events, and one-on-one dialog with specific organizations	FARA		Meeting reports	schedule of meetings
			Develop stakeholder-specific advocacy materials	FARA CIP		Advocacy materials developed and disseminated	By June 2018
3. Create demand for comprehensive solutions to the micronutrient problem	Regional advocacy strategy developed and implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional forum for ministries of agriculture, health Regional health bodies (WAHO, ECSA, SADC) Education, trade and industry Farmers' organizations Food industry Consumer organizations Relevant professional associations 	Raise awareness among and understanding of policy-makers on micronutrient deficiencies (vitamin A and iron) and food-based approaches to tackle them through policy briefs, fact sheets, policy dialog	FARA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional health organizations (e.g. WAHO, ECSA, SADC health desk) Relevant professional associations Organizations dealing with micronutrient deficiencies in the region, i.e. Helen Keller International, UNICEF, World Vision International etc. Initiatives on micronutrient deficiencies such as the Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally project Agriculture to Nutrition Project Creating Homestead Agriculture for Nutrition and Gender Equity 	Heads of state and ministers of health and agriculture making reference to biofortified crops and food-based approaches to addressing malnutrition	Ongoing
			Provide new evidence to policy-makers in regional organizations from established knowledge portals and networks including BNFB D-Group	FARA CIP		African nutrition champions speaking about micronutrient deficiencies, food-based approaches to addressing malnutrition and biofortification	Ongoing
		Private sector especially communication networks (MTN, Safaricom, Vodafone etc.)	Sensitize regional media agencies on the prevailing micronutrient problem	FARA CIP		Articles and media coverage on food and nutrition issues including biofortification and OFSP	Ongoing

Objective	BNFB output	Targets	Activities	Lead	Allies	Success indicators	Time scale
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitize and engage media and telecommunications service providers • Sensitize current high profile African champions on micronutrient deficiency and its contribution to morbidity and mortality. These champions include Graca Machel, King of Lesotho, African representatives on the Global Panel on Agriculture Systems and Food Systems for Nutrition (African Development Bank President, Akinwumi Adesina, and former president of Ghana J.A. Kufuor • African Leaders for Nutrition 	FARA Advocacy Champions HarvestPlus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUN Movement • Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger (a combined WHO, FAO, UNICEF and World Food Programme initiative) 	Speeches and statements of champions including micronutrient (vitamin A and iron) deficiency, food-based approaches to addressing malnutrition and biofortification in regional platforms	Ongoing

Building Nutritious Food Baskets

The Building Nutritious Food Baskets: Scaling up Biofortified Crops for Nutrition Security seeks to reduce hidden hunger by catalyzing sustainable investment for the production and utilization of biofortified crops (Orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP); vitamin A (yellow) cassava, vitamin A (orange) maize and high iron/zinc beans) at scale. The project is implemented in **Nigeria** and **Tanzania**, to demonstrate how biofortified crops can be scaled up through a multi-crop ("food basket") approach. BNFB draws on complementary expertise for scaling up through a partnership between CGIAR centers and programs, regional organizations and other public and private sector agencies to create a movement that will eventually reach the target populations. BNFB's hypothesis is that scaling up is dependent on supportive policy environment, strong institutional capacities and availability of proven technologies.

