

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - DETAILS

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING: Ministries of Health and Finance **should** increase their investments in strengthening the capacity of agencies responsible for inspection and enforcement of fortification programs

Capacity strengthening efforts should focus on:

- Improving staff skills and equipment (e.g. analytical tools) in food standard laboratories
- Boosting regulatory bodies and border control agencies' ability to inspect and audit the quality and safety of fortified and nutritious foods
- Increasing the skills and tools to monitor fortified food consumption and impact

Opportunities and interventions for strengthening capacity building efforts should make use of both national and regional expertise and resources.

LEGISLATION, GUIDELINES & STANDARDS: Government agencies and regulatory bodies **should** consistently enforce existing legislation, promulgate new smart policies and systematically adopt regional harmonized guidelines and tools for monitoring fortified and nutritious foods

Particular attention should be given to:

- Enforcing the rules and regulations that guarantee compliance with fortification standards
- Adopting existing regional harmonized manuals/guidelines (particularly on internal/external monitoring)
- Establishing policies that reduce import duties on fortificants and reduce taxes on companies that are developing healthier products

Enforcing existing and innovative fortification legislation and standards is needed to improve regional trade, ensure quality and consistency, and expand coverage across the region.

REGULAR MONITORING: Government agencies and regulatory bodies **should** give increased priority to monitoring efforts not only in terms of industry compliance but equally in relation to the actual consumption and impact of food fortification programs

Efforts should focus on:

- Broadening the scale and regularity of food fortification monitoring at the point of production, in custom warehouses and at retail stores
- Monitoring quantitative and qualitative data relating to consumption rates and impact of food fortification in terms of nutrition, health and economic development
- Building robust accountability structures with the food industry and sharing relevant data emerging from the monitoring with the private sector to improve their performance

Regular and better targeted monitoring allows for the collection of more useful and up to date data that can inform and improve decision-making at all levels of food fortification programmes.

KNOWLEDGE & INFORMATION: Ministries of Health, Education and Industry **should** strengthen mechanisms for inter-country sharing of food fortification information and data, while making better use of this knowledge to inform more effective nutrition education programmes

Specific focus should be on:

- Strengthening inter-country collaboration and knowledge exchange through regional platforms
- Strengthening documentation and dissemination of best practices and lessons learnt and promote knowledge sharing and utilization
- Initiating and rolling out influential nutrition education programmes with civil society

Learning and exchanging information between countries in the region can ensure best practices and successful interventions are more widely adopted for increased coverage and better programming.

INVESTMENTS AND FUNDING: Ministries of Finance and relevant line Ministries **should** increase allocations within national and sub-national budget lines towards food fortification monitoring, capacity building and knowledge management activities, and enforcement of legislation and standards

Increased investments should be allocated to:

- Food fortification monitoring activities and data collection tools
- Trainings and skill-strengthening interventions related to food fortification monitoring, enforcement of standards, impact tracking and laboratory testing
- Creating and expanding knowledge sharing platforms and food fortification education programmes
- Food fortification enforcement mechanisms and activities by regulatory bodies

In view of the high returns in terms of productivity, education, health and economic growth, increasing investments in food fortification programmes is not only the right thing to do but also a smart and sustainable choice.