

CONSULTANCY – NUTRITION-RELEVANT POLICY IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

The Action Against Hunger Regional Office for West and Central Africa is looking for a consultant to participate in a research study on nutrition-relevant policies in West and Central Africa.

1. BACKGROUND

The West Africa subregion experiences a heavy malnutrition burden among its under-five population. The prevalence of stunting in under-fives is 29.2%, this is greater than the global average of 21.9%. The West Africa subregion's prevalence of wasting in under-fives of 8.1% is also greater than the global average of 7.3%. Some 32.5% of infants under 6 months in the -region are exclusively breastfed, while the average low birth weight prevalence of 15.2% is greater than the global average of 14.6%. The adult population in the region also faces a malnutrition burden. An average of 49.3% of women of reproductive age have anaemia, and 6.7% of adult men have diabetes, compared to 6.2% of women (*source: Global Nutrition Report, 2020*).

Central Africa also still experiences a malnutrition burden among its under-five population. The average prevalence of overweight in under-fives is 4.6%, this is less than the global average of 5.9%. The prevalence of stunting in under-fives is 32.1% - the second highest compared to other subregions in Africa. The prevalence of wasting in under-fives is 7.2%, this is less than the global average of 7.3% (*source: Global Nutrition Report, 2020*).

Studies show that a variety of factors drive the burden of under and over nutrition, including insufficient access to health services, low rates of early breastfeeding, inadequate dietary diversity among children between 6-23 months, inadequate WASH practices and low access to sanitation, inadequate access to social protection systems, etc. Despite limited progress to date, we now see a growing political commitment to address the high rates of maternal and child malnutrition in the West and central African regions. Such commitment needs to be effectively translated into appropriate policy choices and program action, including in nutrition-relevant sectors, if it is to generate sustained change at scale. To translate these commitments into action in nutrition-relevant sectors, more knowledge and guidance is still needed on how to elaborate, integrate, and measure nutrition objectives, actions, and indicators into policies from the nutrition-relevant sectors.

Several policy reviews have been conducted since 2015 to strengthen the understanding of national and regional stakeholders and policy makers regarding the current direction of nutrition-relevant policy in their country/region and its implications. In 2015, Action Against Hunger Regional Office for West and Central Africa (AAH ROWCA) published a study on “Integration of nutrition into contributing sector programs and policies”. This study sought to assess the commitment in terms of nutrition-sensitive action programming in each AAH intervention country of the West Africa region¹, through an analysis of the full range of policies within nutrition-relevant sectors. The study also sought to understand the difficulties likely to hamper the implementation of these policies in a bid to assess support needs. It also drew on an analysis of the sectorial policies of 11 countries of the region and two case studies (Mali and Mauritania).

¹ 11 countries at the time: Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Nigeria

In 2019, *Transform Nutrition West Africa* (TNWA²) performed a policy landscape analysis for Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and the West Africa region (ECOWAS policies). This resulted in three briefs³ that included nutrition-relevant policies, strategies, and action plans in West Africa.

Through dissemination from the policy reviews undertaken by TNWA and AAH ROWCA and various engagements at regional level, interest was expressed to extend these studies to the whole West African region. Therefore, TNWA and AAH ROWCA decided to collaboratively set-up a research study on nutrition-relevant policies in West Africa.

Furthermore, Action Against Hunger implements in Africa a project named “Confluences”, funded by the French Development Agency, that aims to improve nutrition security in 5 countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Cameroun, CAR, Madagascar) by developing preventive actions and supporting public policies. In this framework, Action Against Hunger wishes to conduct policy landscape analysis in these 4 additional countries, in addition to the partnership with IFPRI.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to strengthen the understanding of the current landscape of nutrition-relevant policy and its implications within West African countries and across the region. In addition, drawing on the evidence generated, it aims to strengthen policy development by providing guidelines on nutrition-relevant policy development at country level.

3. SUMMARY OF THE APPROACH

The policy review will be conducted jointly by AAH ROWCA and TNWA, IFPRI. All WA countries as defined by the ECOWAS (and Mauritania) will be included. **AAH ROWCA will conduct the policy review for the following countries: Sierra Leone, Mauritania, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Mali, Liberia, Niger, Guinea, Benin.**

The research study will be conducted according to the following steps:

- Policy landscaping involving a desk review including collection, review, and synthesis of nutrition-relevant policies, strategies (including strategic plans), and action plans (hereafter referred to as “policies”). These policies will be at the national/federal level for countries. They must be either currently in use or in the advanced drafting stage as of January 2020 and must be adhered to by the government. Policies will cover all relevant sectors including, but not limited to: Nutrition, Agriculture, Food systems, WASH, Health (ANC), Social protection, ECD/Education, and other sectors as relevant.
- Identification of policies relevant for the study using several inclusion criteria and a screening process.
- Analysis of each policy following a 5PD process (which focuses on Problem, Policy and Program, People, Priority), according to a methodology developed by TNWA IFPRI and endorsed by AAH ROWCA for the purpose of this joint study.

² TNWA is led by IFPRI in collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the North West university (NWU) on policy analyses, leadership development, and knowledge mobilization. It aims to improve and support policy and program decisions and actions to accelerate reductions in maternal and child malnutrition through an inclusive process of knowledge generation and mobilization.

³ For an example see: <https://westafrica.transformnutrition.org/output/nutrition-policy-in-burkina-faso/>

The expected outputs of the research study are:

- Policy notes for all 15 West African countries and Mauritania, including updates for Nigeria, Burkina Faso and at regional level
- A synthesis brief
- A guideline for nutrition-relevant policy development
- A Journal manuscript

4. Scope of the consultancy

As the desk review and screening process steps have been finalized, AAH ROWCA is looking for a consultant to analyse the selected policies for 9 countries: **Sierra Leone, Mauritania, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Mali, Liberia, Niger, Guinea, Benin**

The consultant will be expected to:

- Conduct analysis for all selected policies in these 9 countries according to TNWA/IFPRI & AAH joint methodology
- Draft a policy note for each of these 9 countries to present the results of the analysis
- Participate in the synthesis brief

5. Timeline of the consultancy

The duration of the consultancy is expected to be of 40 working days.

Activity	15 Jul	8 Aug	9 Sep
Analysis of 9 WA countries			
Policy notes development			
Participation in the synthesis brief development with IFPRI			
Analysis of 4 additional countries & policy notes development			

6. Terms and conditions

The contract will be managed by the AAH ROWCA. The research can be carried out from the home of the consultant. The consultant must have his/her own equipment necessary for the research (computer, phone, etc.). The consultant will be supported by AAH ROWCA advocacy department. The research will be managed by the ROWCA Regional Advocacy Adviser in collaboration with TNWA / IFPRI.

7. Profile and expected competencies

1. Technical background in public health, nutrition, international development, or political science
2. At least three years' experience carrying out research projects in developing countries with published results
3. Good knowledge of the global initiatives and institutions related to nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive approaches
4. Demonstrable experience working in the West African region, experience working with regional institutions, NGOs, and donors, is beneficial
5. Proven ability to present written material in a clear, concise, and engaging manner to a range of different audiences

6. A strong sense of initiative and capacity to work autonomously with multi-cultural teams
7. Fluent in English and French (oral and written)
8. Commitment to the values, vision and mission of Action Against Hunger

8. Application

If you are interested in applying for Phase One of this research project, please send your expression of interest, including your CV including references to similar studies and researches, motivation letter and a financial offer including your daily rate, terms and conditions, by July 15th, 2020 to the following e-mail address: waro@wa.acfspain.org