

A4NH Workshop Series on

Food Systems for Healthier Diets in Nigeria: Policy Perspectives and Scenarios

Organized by

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Wageningen University and Research (WUR)

Hosted by

The Project Coordination Unit (PCU) of the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD)

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Background and motivation: The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic further aggravates Nigeria’s nutrition problems. Even before the pandemic, Nigeria faced a growing triple burden of malnutrition: Maternal and child undernutrition rates are persistently high and partly even increasing; micronutrient deficiencies are widespread; and overweight, obesity, and related non-communicable diseases (such as cardiovascular diseases, type-2 diabetes, and hypertension) are rising rapidly. Unhealthy diets are at the root of all forms of malnutrition and drive Nigeria’s nutrition problems. Consumers’ access to healthy, affordable diets and food choices are determined by their immediate food environment and the broader food system. At present, nutritious foods from various sectors are in short supply; access and affordability are barriers to consumption of nutritious foods at recommended levels. Government policies in agriculture and upstream and downstream sectors of the food supply chain—including trade and transport, food processing and transformation, and food retailing and food services—shape food systems and consumers’ food environments through creating economic incentives, promoting innovations, directing public investments, and defining rules and regulations. Given shared constitutional responsibilities of the federal and state governments in several food and nutrition-related sectors and diverse interests from the civil society, the private sector, and the international development partner community, coordination in policy formulation and implementation of policies can be challenging. Nigerian governments are in the process of formulating national medium and long-term development plans such as the Medium-term National Development Plan 2021–2025 and 2026–2030 and the Nigeria Agenda 2050, in which food systems and nutrition-related goals are expected to play an important role.

Objectives: The workshop series has three objectives:

- (1) Achieve a common understanding of drivers and challenges of food system-related policymaking, examined from federal and state government perspectives;
- (2) Inform and facilitate a dialogue on multi-level policy coordination and implementation between federal and state government policymakers; and
- (3) Develop scenarios for coordinated federal and state policy action toward transforming food systems for healthier diets (considering the “new normal” imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic).

Methodology: The workshop series adopts a participatory approach, following the methods developed by Posthumus et al. (2018, 2019) for food systems decision-support.¹ The workshops will bring together the expertise and experience of policymakers in charge of food systems issues from the federal government and the governments of four to six key states

¹ Posthumus, H. et al. 2018. *Enhancing Food Systems in Nigeria: Scope and Perspective for Dutch Policy Interventions* & Posthumus, H., et al. 2019. *A Decision-support Tool for the Design of Food and Nutrition Security Programming*. Both publications from Royal Tropical Institute and Wageningen University, commissioned by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands.

that have diverse food systems and a particular interest in participating in the process. Because of the public health risk due to the ongoing pandemic, a series of small, decentralized workshops will be implemented (rather than a single large, centralized workshop). The workshop series will be implemented in collaboration with State governments throughout January to March 2021. In each selected state, a workshop will be with policymakers from various departments and sectors relevant to food systems. The information and knowledge acquired will be utilized in an in-person workshop with federal-level policymakers in Abuja. Within the limitations of the travel restrictions under COVID-19, the views of the state-level policymakers will be expressed in the workshop in Abuja. All workshops will be facilitated by members of the research team based in Nigeria. The discussions of the workshops will be guided by a workshop script and informed by research-based evidence generated by the researcher team and collaborators during the first phase of the project.²

The methods and outcomes of the workshop series will be published in a workshop report, and the key findings will be summarized in a policy brief. The workshop series should also serve as a starting point for further in-depth discussions and collaborations in the next phase of the project, and its findings will inform modeling exercises of policy scenarios for food system transformation that are planned for the next phase.

Project context: The CGIAR research program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH), under its first Flagship, aims at transforming food systems to produce and supply more diverse, nutritious, and safe foods and promote their consumption for healthier diets especially among the poor through the support of enabling policies and food system innovations. A4NH is led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in collaboration with Wageningen University and Research (WUR) in the Netherlands. Nigeria is one of the program's four focus countries, where the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), coordinated through its Project Coordination Unit (PCU), is a key partner at the national level. The workshop series is part of multiyear project on food system transformation in Nigeria that is located at the intersection of diagnosis and foresight for food system transformation and scaling up and anchoring of successful actions toward transformation for healthier diets.

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² Relevant publications include:

de Brauw, A., and S. Herskowitz. "Income Variability, Evolving Diets, and Elasticity Estimation of Demand for Processed Foods in Nigeria." *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*.

Ecker, O., A. Comstock, R. Babtunde, and K. Andam. 2020. *Poor Dietary Quality is Nigeria's Key Nutrition Problem*. Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy, Policy Research Brief 119. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.

Ecker, O., and P. Hatzenbuehler. 2020. "Food Consumption-Production Response to Agricultural Policy and Macroeconomic Change in Nigeria." Unpublished Manuscript, IFPRI.

Ecker, O., and A. Kennedy. 2019. *Transforming Agriculture to Improve Food and Nutrition Security in Nigeria*. Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy, Policy Research Brief 99. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.

Maziya-Dixon, B., T. Achterbosch, D. Adelane, O. Adeyemi, D. Akerele, A. Akinola, ..., and I. Brouwer. 2020. *Food Systems for Healthier Diets in Nigeria: A Research Agenda*. Unpublished manuscript, IITA.

M.G. Ojide and J.O. Ogunji, 2020. *Food Systems for Healthier Diets: Nigeria Policy Baseline Report*. Unpublished manuscript, Wageningen University

Raaijmakers, I., H. Snoek, B. Maziya-Dixon, and T. Achterbosch. 2018. "Drivers of Vegetable Consumption in Urban Nigeria: Food Choice Motives, Knowledge, and Self-efficacy." *Sustainability* 10(12): 4771.