



# TECHNICAL MEETING ON STRENGTHENING FOOD FORTIFICATION

11 MAY 2017  
INDIA HABITAT CENTRE  
NEW DELHI



**A Technical Meeting on Strengthening Food Fortification was organized by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi in partnership with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN).**

### **Background:**

India is committed to promote and increase the availability of safe and nutritious foods through various public-funded programmes and commercial channels. FSSAI is actively engaging with the Food Business Operators (FBOs) to promote good nutrition by sensitizing and facilitating various categories of FBOs to adopt fortification of staples, as an industry norm. This is a significant move that will help reduce micronutrient deficiencies in India. Various development agencies are partnering with FSSAI to support this mission.

Crucial to the success of a large scale food fortification programme, is the stable and uninterrupted supply of quality assured premix of micronutrients. Hence, it is important that there is a pool of credible "Micronutrients premix suppliers", who are certified / notified by FSSAI. This will facilitate the FBOs to source quality assured micronutrient premixes and in turn, provide quality assured fortified food products.

Therefore, the purpose of this Technical Meeting was to share GAIN's global experience of providing accreditation to premix suppliers and micronutrient producers through its Premix Facility, which may facilitate FSSAI, the national regulator, to establish an 'FSSAI Premix Accreditation Facility'.

In addition, it also proposed to share GAIN's Fortification Assessment Coverage Tool (FACT), which GAIN has used in different parts of the world to measure the impact of food fortification after implementing it for a couple of years across India.

### **The Meeting:**

Technical Meeting on Strengthening Food Fortification was Chaired by Mr Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI. It was attended by senior officials from FSSAI and the development sector partners working in the nutrition sector, including Tata Trusts, WHO, WFP, FFI, PATH, MI, ICCIDD and GAIN.

Mr. Tarun Vij, Country Director, GAIN India, welcomed everybody to the meeting, shared GAIN's perspective and experience on food fortification across the different States.

Mr Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, inaugurated the Technical Meeting and provided FSSAI's perspective on its role in facilitating the Industry to conform to the fortification standards across the staples. Mr. Greg Garrett, Director, Large Scale Food Fortification, GAIN, shared the process adopted by the GAIN Premix Facility to accord accreditation to the premix suppliers across the globe.

This presentation led to positive discussions around the need for the list of credible premix suppliers. The participants shared the challenges faced in scaling up food fortification, especially in the government supported programmes. It was expressed that a notification of the premix suppliers, based on the quality parameters by FSSAI, would go a long way in promoting and scaling up food fortification across the country.

Dr. N. Bhaskar, Advisor (Quality Assurance), at FSSAI, appreciated the need for accreditation / recognition of premix suppliers within India, so that the quality of fortified foods is not compromised. He presented the process of notifying micronutrient premix suppliers. He clarified that having an FBO license issued by FSSAI, does not indicate that the premix supplier is an "FSSAI notified" supplier.

This commitment from FSSAI was highly lauded and all agreed that such a notification from FSSAI, would give confidence to the State Governments in adopting food fortification as the policy in the public-funded programmes. In addition, it would also encourage the FBOs to accept fortification of various foods as an industry norm.

Mr. Greg Garrett also presented GAIN's Fortification Assessment and Coverage Tool (FACT), which is used by GAIN globally to assess the effective coverage of food fortification programmes, as well as identify the foods that are commonly consumed within a country / region that are 'fortifiable'.

This was followed by enriching discussions by the group on understanding the current levels of micronutrient deficiencies especially that of vitamin A and D, as anaemia is already covered under NFHS. The partners also shared their perspective and experiences in conducting similar surveys and the challenges faced in assessing the consumption of fortified staples at the household level.

### Major Outcomes:

- FSSAI agreed to develop and fine-tune the process of "Notifying" the premix suppliers within India and placing their names on the FSSAI website. This process of "Notification" would be finalised by the end of May 2017. This will facilitate the FBOs to produce quality assured fortified foods.
- Once food fortification gains ground, GAIN would undertake FACT surveys to assess the extent and type of fortified foods produced and consumed in various Indian States.
- GAIN, with other development partners, would work with the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) to assess the prevalence of vitamin A and D deficiencies and undertake repeat surveys over a period of time, to assess the impact of food fortification in the reduction of these nutritional deficiencies.

The meeting ended with a 'Vote of Thanks' to all the participants for their time and enriching deliberations and insights.

