

# Evaluation Brief

*Decentralized evaluation for evidence-based decision making*

## Final Evaluation of Enhanced Nutrition and Value Chains (ENVAC) Project in Ghana (2016-2021)

### SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

The subject of this decentralized final evaluation is the Enhanced Nutrition and Value Chain (ENVAC) Project in Ghana, and it covers all activities implemented within the framework of this project between March 2016 and June 2021. The ENVAC Project is composed of three main pillars: **P1**, support to smallholder farmers for increased local production, improved quality & market integration of nutritious food staples; **P2**, support to food processors for enhanced local processing capacities for Complementary Nutritious Foods (CNF); **P3**, promotion of consumption of processed nutritious foods and nutritious crops among the targeted population.

The evaluation was commissioned by WFP Ghana, it started in April 2021, with fieldwork conducted in June 2021 and was completed in September 2021.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The main objectives of the evaluation are accountability and learning. Specifically, the evaluation assessed the performance and results of the ENVAC Project and identified reasons why certain results were achieved or not achieved, to draw lessons and recommendations for learning. The evaluation looked both at the results and the process of the intervention, as well as its quality throughout the implementation.

### METHODOLOGY

The ENVAC Project evaluation was based on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Evaluation questions were developed for each criterion. It applied the before-and-after method combined with contribution analysis, whilst using as much as possible existing qualitative and quantitative data. Systematic triangulation of data obtained through the different sources was performed to validate the

results and avoid bias in the evaluative judgement.

### KEY FINDINGS

#### Relevance

The ENVAC project is built on previous experiences and evaluations and well-aligned with both the National Policy framework and WFP Policies. The approach proposed for **P1** which targeted smallholder farmers already able to produce and market their crops is relevant, however, its relevance was reduced by the scattered nature of the activities and the lack of clarity regarding the inclusion of vulnerable producers.

Despite the fact that the two agro-food industries supported under **P2** were not identified through a formal open tender, their selection was relevant as based on previous assessments.

The SBCC activities under **P3** were fully relevant, contrary to the CBT activities whose relevance is reduced by the lack of vulnerability criteria for targeting.

The overall focus on Food Safety and Quality throughout the three pillars was very relevant to the needs of stakeholders and aligned with national priorities.

#### Effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the intervention under **P1** is fair. However, it should be noted that activities were numerous and one-off in nature, with limited follow up. Many topics were covered, but the focus was mainly on post-harvest handling.

Both agro-food industries (**P2**) were enabled to build a new production site and to produce and supply CNF for pregnant and lactating women but were unable to produce SuperCereal Plus for children meeting WFP requirements.

#### Efficiency

The cost-efficiency evaluation was limited by the absence of financial reports, based on a



rough estimate, the cost per CBT (**P3**) appeared higher than planned initially. Management efficiency was limited by a lack of external and internal coordination, with several activities delayed due to weaknesses in time management. The WFP M&E system did not capture properly the effects of **P1** and **P3** activities.

### Impact

The effects and impacts on food security and malnutrition were not adequately captured by the M&E system. Some positive **P1** effects were mentioned but cannot be necessarily attributed to ENVAC activities. However, it could be legitimately assumed that the project has contributed to developing the skills of stakeholders involved in **P3**.

The main output of the project was the accreditation of one of the agro-businesses supported through **P2** as WFP SuperCereal provider.

ENVAC Project impact on Food Safety and Quality management remained limited, as a real strategy to strengthen the technical capacities of national institutions was not developed as initially planned.

Regarding the gender dimension, effects and impacts were weak: no improvement was captured under **P1**; **P2** activities started targeting women only in 2021; under **P3**, female retailers were financially empowered and CNFs exposed women to alternative food sources. A potential negative outcome linked to the CBT targeting out-of-school girls may be that they would have been incentivized to remain out of school. Although this risk had been identified, it was not monitored during the implementation.

### Sustainability

The availability of CNFs produced locally is not fully ensured as the supported agro-business may use the equipment provided by the project for other purposes. Additionally, the CNF value chain developed by the project is not really market driven as it is mainly led by WFP demand rather than consumers' willingness to pay for CNF. Also, **P1** does not demonstrate a high level of sustainability due to weak linkages between aggregators and processors along the value chain.

Finally, sustainability is hampered by the fact that partners, including Government actors, were mainly used as service providers and the capacity building of institutions was limited.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overall Assessment

For what concerns the general strategy, the ENVAC Project offers a new perspective on the type of actions that can be envisaged and provides lessons to better support Ghana on its development trajectory.

Although Food Safety and Quality Management was a key point of the project document, it was not translated into robust activities. Neither WFP nor the national institutions have enough capacity to handle this aspect and there was not enough focus on building the capacities of national institutions.

On the other hand, the strategy focused on developing the capacities of local private businesses to produce CNFs was pertinent and could contribute to a sustainable increase in access to SuperCereal and SuperCereal Plus. However, ENVAC CNF food chain approach is likely to exclude vulnerable smallholder farmers, especially females, from other WFP programs supporting farmers.

The support to smallholder farmers and farmers organizations to develop production and sales of raw materials for CNF production was relevant but was insufficiently focused on the areas and conditions that could make a difference and lead to increased volumes of quality raw materials produced and sold.

The project had no impact on the food security of smallholder farmers because the project was not designed to target the most vulnerable farmers (including women), nor to answer their specific needs.

Targeting pregnant and lactating women and children under 2, the population at risk of malnutrition, by combining SBCC and facilitated access to CNF through market and vouchers is relevant and innovative.

Finally, the lack of technical capacity (Gender, Food Safety & Quality Management) at CO level impacted the implementation of ENVAC, and poor project management limited the opportunities to learn from the project.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the recommendations of the evaluation team are:

**R1:** next CSP should include a CNFs value chain approach based on the lessons learnt from ENVAC, tailored to Ghana Beyond Aid context.

**R2:** WFP should help to improve FSQ management systems at all stages of the CNF production chain.

**R3:** If R2 is validated, pursue partnership with two private actors to facilitate a sustainable supply of locally produced quality CNFs.

**R4:** strengthen partnership with development actors and MOFA to develop and upscale the value chain approach to intensify market linkages between smallholder farmers and industrial processors.

**R5:** strengthen and formalize the innovative strategy that combines nutrition assistance, promotion of good feeding practices and market access for local CNFs.

**R6:** develop specific interventions to support vulnerable smallholder farmers in line with the Global Food Security Strategy adopted in Ghana.

**R7:** ensure implementation and monitoring of ongoing ENVAC activities and draw lessons from these activities before the end of 2021.

**R8:** strengthen CO capacity with the skills required for future activities: capacity building, institutional strengthening, partnership management, M&E and capitalization, Food Safety & Quality and gender.