

At the 2024 Africa Food Systems Conference Summit hosted by the Government of Rwanda and the Africa Food Systems Conference (AFS) Forum Partner's group, the Fortified Whole Grain Alliance (FWGA) unveiled an ambitious goal of reaching 10 million people across seven countries by 2025 with fortified whole grains (FWGs) solutions. The targeted countries are Benin, Burundi, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Rwanda.

Rwanda's Minister of Local Government, Jean Claude Musabyimana expressed optimism during the launch, stating, "Together, we are more than just a coalition; we are a beacon of hope, a testament to what we can achieve when governments, the private sector, nonprofits, and communities come together with a shared vision. By working together, we can create a future where fortified whole grains are a staple in every household, ensuring the health and well-being of future generations."

A coalition of stakeholders from across the food system, the Fortified Whole Grain Alliance (FWGA), is supported by The Rockefeller Foundation, Novo Nordisk Foundation, and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The alliance collaborates with core, implementing, and institutional partners such as the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), DSM-Firmenich, Boston Consulting Group, and others.

Roy Steiner, Senior Vice President for Food at The Rockefeller Foundation, noted, "The Fortified Whole Grain Alliance is a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation. By investing in fortified whole grains, we are investing in the health and well-being of future generations—especially people living in vulnerable communities. This initiative aligns with The Rockefeller Foundation's commitment to building a more equitable and sustainable world where everyone can thrive, no matter their circumstances."

This latest effort advances the alliance's long-term vision of catalyzing a significant shift in consumption patterns of fortified whole grains to tackle global malnutrition and promote more sustainable food systems for people and the planet.

### Measurable Impact, Lasting Change

Active initiatives are underway in Kenya, Rwanda, and Burundi, focusing on fortified whole-grain maize. Expansion plans are included for at least three West African nations (Ghana, Nigeria, and Benin) concentrating on parboiled unpolished rice, and

North Africa (Egypt), where efforts would focus on whole wheat flour. The FWGA also set a target of at least 50% of grain foods in institutional markets and 25% in consumer markets within low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to be fortified whole grain by 2032.

Lawrence Haddad, Executive Director of GAIN, said, “GAIN is excited to be a part of the Fortified Whole Grain Alliance. This initiative can significantly impact global nutrition, especially if we focus on public procurement. By increasing the availability of fortified whole grains, we can improve the health of millions of people while benefiting the environment.”

### Fortified Whole Grains: A Sustainable Solution

Shifting from refined grains to fortified whole grains offers many benefits. They can significantly improve dietary quality without increasing production costs. Fortified whole grains offer six to seven times more nutritional value than their refined counterparts, providing higher protein, fiber, and essential micronutrients. In addition, this transition supports environmental sustainability by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as fortified whole grains require less water, land, fertilizers, and pesticides.