

Action brief

Engaging with the private sector to improve nutrition in Zambia – The Good Food Logo Initiative

© WPF/Andy Higgins

Country: Zambia **Themes:** Coordination and capacity strengthening **Sub-themes:** Strengthening capacity to better coordinate with sectors and groups

Date: January 2023



Overview



The Good Food Logo (GFL) was developed in Zambia through a joint effort of stakeholders in the public and private sectors to improve nutrition in Zambia, facilitated by the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network and the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) of Zambia. The initiative aims to bring together, through



the development of a certification process and logo, government ambitions to promote nutrition and local companies providing nutritious food.



Objectives of the action brief

This action brief outlines a joint effort of private businesses and the Government of Zambia to reduce malnutrition in the country.



Period covered

This action brief captures the period 2010 to 2022.



What action was taken?

In the past two decades, Zambia has experienced undernutrition coupled with growing rates of obesity and noncommunicable diseases. To address this triple burden, the SUN Business Network (SBN) and the National Food and Nutrition Commission brought together technical experts, including representatives of selected small and medium companies, to develop a set of criteria to guide the selection of food products for the consumer. Products meeting these criteria are branded with a badge – the Good Food Logo – indicating that the products are a healthier option for consumers. The GFL, a joint initiative of the NFNC and the Zambia Bureau of Standards (ZABS), serves as a platform for private businesses to contribute constructively to national nutrition priorities by increasing access to nutritious foods.

The GFL is a front-of-pack logo for products that meet a set of nutrition criteria based on international dietary guidelines from the World Health Organization. The five main criteria areas are trans fats, salt, sugar, dietary fiber and micronutrients. It does not focus on fortification, as the aim was to include local fruit, vegetables and healthy meat products and not just processed foods. The GFL is based on an international model (CHOICES logo) but tailored to the local food basket. It is additional to the Zambia Bureau of Standards certification logo.

To develop the GFL and gain consensus from a broad range of stakeholders, a multistep process was undertaken from 2016 to 2020:

Development and validation of the nutrient criteria and administrative setup for logo implementation:

- Formulation of technical steering group to identify logo model, product categories, and nutrient criteria, linked to the various products.
- Approval of logo administrative mechanisms and processes, including a learning visit to Ghana (to review the local Obaasima logo) and Thailand.
- Signing of memorandum of understanding among relevant key partners (NFNC, ZABS, World Food Programme/SBN).

Logo development and consumer testing:

- Consultations to determine what “nutritious” means to people and to assess food consumption patterns.

- Market analysis on what would catch people’s attention visually, as well as a detailed survey of consumption habits.

Other key actions:

- Fundraising, both domestically and internationally.
- Defining joint ways of working with other stakeholders.
- Recruitment of businesses to apply for the GFL.
- Launch of the GFL.
- Collaboration with retailers to roll out the GFL and promote it to consumers.
- Continued support and engagement.

Key success factors that contributed to the GFL being scaled up include:

- Increased level of public–private engagement and cooperation to support the development and launch of the GFL.
- Willingness and commitment of government stakeholders.
- High level of support from volunteers and experts, which provided credibility, and enabled the initiative to be moved forward despite having only a small group leading it.
- Earlier market research analysis to understand the consumers and what they would want.





What would the country do differently?

A few key stakeholders were unable to participate in the initial technical steering committee that set the objectives and criteria for the GFL. When these stakeholders engaged later in the process, they had a number of questions that needed to be addressed before the work could proceed, delaying the timeline for implementation.

Ownership of the GFL across multiple government agencies was a great example of collaboration, but putting the pieces in place was complicated and time-consuming and made more difficult by turnover within the agencies. Repeated efforts were made by SBN and NFNC to orient new staff on the logo and the roles and responsibilities of each agency.



© WPF/Andy Higgins



Adaptation and Applicability

Adapting and replicating the experience from Zambia will require a focus on:

- **Determining what nutrition problem(s) need to be solved.**
- **Understanding the nutrient labelling options and assessing the potential within the country's regulatory context, including a preference for mandatory versus voluntary labelling schemes.**
- **Reviewing potential nutrient criteria and food-based dietary guidelines that might be used as a basis for nutrient criteria.**
- **Establishing a technical committee to take the work forward, led by a government agency.**
- **Consider consulting neighboring countries with similar food baskets. As the GFL nutrient criteria were developed, the team considered potential for easy adaptation in neighboring countries with similar food baskets, but recognized that this could have been strengthened through more direct consultations with national counterparts in those countries.**

The process from start to finish can be long; the time from initiation to launch of the GFL was more than five years. However, earlier engagement with a variety of stakeholders, both private and public, ensures that greater buy-in is gained from development to delivery.



© WPF/Andy Higgins



What was the role of the SUN Movement in this intervention?

Zambia joined the SUN movement in December 2010, and the SBN in Zambia now has 81 members. The SBN was instrumental in supporting the Government of Zambia in championing this initiative.

The SBN is the private-sector branch of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and aims to

support businesses in growing the roles they play in improving nutrition and to support SUN Countries in developing national business engagement strategies. The SBN helped facilitate the development and implementation of the GFL, both via leadership of the SBN team and by fundraising for all development and launch activities.



© WFP/Andy Higgins



Next steps

→ Work is under way to sustain the gains made from the GFL and share the Zambian experience with other countries.



Further information

SUN Business Network case study 1: Zambia Good Food Logo detailed case study

<https://nutritionconnect.org/media/89>

World Food Programme News Story

<https://www.wfp.org/stories/good-food-logo-how-simple-graphic-aims-boost-nutrition-zambia>

This Good Practice was developed in collaboration with the SUN Business Network. For more information about the SBN, please visit their website: <https://sunbusinessnetwork.org/>

