

Shaping Food Environments in Transitioning Economies for Sustainable and Healthy Diets (FETE) Project Overview



About

Budget: 1,3 Mio. €

Project duration: 01.01.2023 – 30.09.2026

Funding: Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), Germany

Acronym: FETE

Consortium:

- CSIR-Science and Technology Policy Research Institute, Ghana
- Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania
- University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
- University of Nottingham Malaysia
- Thünen Institute, Germany (project coordination)









FETE project

The consortium and stakeholders are studying the external and personal food environments as well as the policy frameworks in Ghana, Malaysia, South Africa and Tanzania.

- Tanzania and Ghana represent lower middle-income countries
- Malaysia and South Africa represent upper middle-income countries



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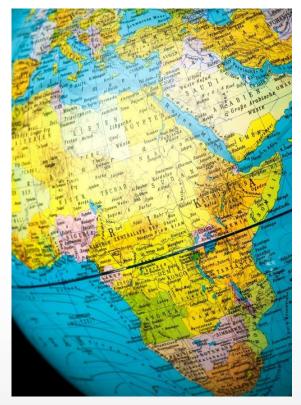








Background



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- Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) face an unprecedented burden of all forms of malnutrition.
 - Increase in non-communicable disease (NCDs).
 - Particularly affecting emerging economies, where dietary habits are undergoing major changes.
- Malnutrition poses a threat to the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The relationship between food environment exposures, nutritional status and health outcomes in LMICs is not well described.







What are food environments?

Food environments are defined as

the consumer interface with the food system that encompasses the availability, affordability, convenience, desirability and sustainability of foods and beverages in wild, cultivated, and built spaces that are influenced by the socio-cultural and political environment and ecosystems within which they are embedded (adapted from Downs et al., 2020).



Turner et al. (2018) distinguish between the personal and the external domain.

Figure: Key elements of food environments

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Overall research question

How can we shape the food environment to promote nutritious diets and improve health?



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Detailed research questions

- 1. Who are the key stakeholders and actors needed in each country?
- 2. What are the **key drivers** of food consumption habits and trends?
- 3. What are the most **important** and common **challenges and opportunities** in the food environment?
- 4. What are appropriate **dietary and policy recommendations** to improve nutritional outcomes?
- 5. How can the methods developed and the results obtained be disseminated more widely in the global South?













Objectives

- 1. Building a **shared understanding** of problems and opportunities.
- Developing solutions to shape the food environment to encourage the consumption of nutritious foods for better health outcomes.
- To provide a reference model for how the approaches identified and the results obtained can be applied more widely in the Global South and later on in the Global North.

Target group: urban deprived communities



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Work Packages

- **WP 0:** Problem identification and shared understanding of challenges and opportunities
- **WP 1:** External food environments and their impact on nutrition and health outcomes
- WP 2: Personal food environment and nutrition vulnerability
- **WP 3:** Development of evidence-based policy recommendations for effective interventions for the target groups
- WP 4: Model of reference for replication and scaling out the project
- **WP 5:** Communication and dissemination strategy, stakeholder engagement, and capacity development
- **WP 6:** Project management and coordination strategy









Approach & methods to research food environments

- Time series analysis and food flow mapping to study food supply trends and identify gaps in availability.
- Participatory Geographical Information
 System (PGIS) survey to characterise the
 external and personal domains of food
 environments.
- Systematic review of food policies and intervention approaches that shape the food environment.
- Complex system models to create a reference model and data and maps dashboard for knowledge management and sharing.



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Partnership













FETE Consortium

- Collaboration: The four partners from the Global South are conducting research on food environments in each country, using a common research agenda.
- Group of interdisciplinary researchers:
 Agriculture, economics, environmental
 sciences, geography, nutrition, public
 health, and social sciences
- South-South collaboration







Capacity Development



PhD students at the DTP Programme at University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, in July/August 2024. © UKZN

- Four Postdocs (1 in each country)
- Eight PhD students (2 in each country)
- Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)
 Programmes are a key element of the project
- All Postdocs and PhD students will be trained in trans-disciplinary research to transform food environments







Stakeholder engagement workshops

- Workshops in each country as part of FETE's transdisciplinary approach
- Stakeholder engangement is defined as:

Collaboration between academia and society in a mutual learning and research process, involving stakeholders and focusing on real-world problems. The solutions developed should be transferable to both scientific and practical discourse and action. (Based on Lang et al. 2012)



Stakeholder engagement workshop at CSIR-Science and Technology Policy Research Institute, Accra, held on 30th April 2024. The purpose of the workshop is to jointly identify common problems, challenges and opportunities in food environments in Ghana. © CSIR-STEPRI.







Use of project results and their implementation



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The project's transdisciplinary approaches will ensure the scalability of actions through:

- The development of policy briefs and the engagement with decision makers to inform the recommended policies and strategies.
- The institutionalisation of project outcomes to facilitate the scaling-up of activities in the field of food environments in the Global South.
- **Dissemination** of results through scientific publications, social media, radio and email











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