

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



January 2025

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

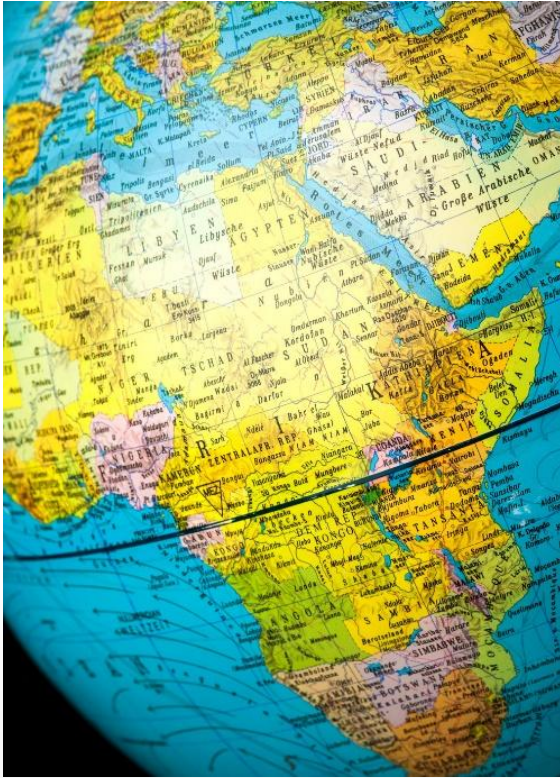
The consortium and stakeholders are studying the external and personal food environments as well as the policy frameworks in Ghana, Malaysia, South Africa and Tanzania.

- **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?**

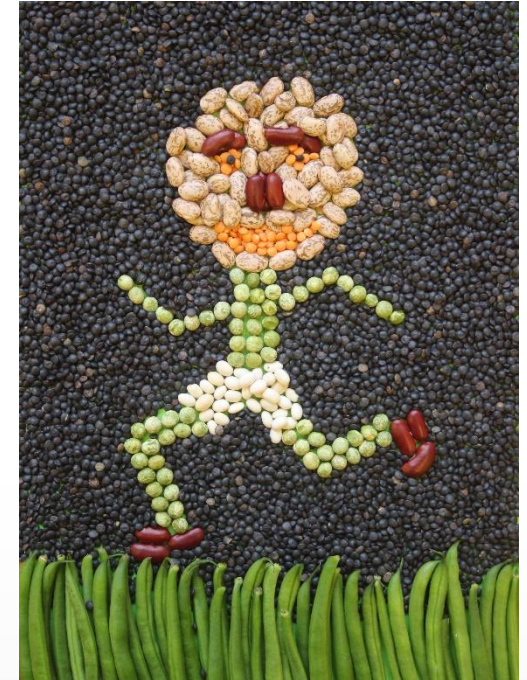


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Objectives

1. Building a **shared understanding** of problems and opportunities.
2. Developing **solutions** to shape the **food environment** to encourage the consumption of nutritious foods for better health outcomes.
3. 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



University of
Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA



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 engagement** 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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