

CONSUMER VOICE FOR FAIR FOOD PRICES IN AFRICA

TERMS OF REFERENCE: FOOD PRICE MONITORING AND COMMUNICATIONS

About the project

Rising food prices are causing serious consumer harm, and the impact is particularly severe in Africa. Food prices appear to be rising excessively, beyond what the pandemic or war in Ukraine would lead us to expect. Even before this crisis, weak competition policy was enabling food price gouging and other uncompetitive practices in many African contexts. To combat unfair pricing and to lessen the impact of rising prices for consumers in Africa, the project 'Consumer Voice for Fair Food Prices' works strengthen consumer advocacy and competition policy at national and regional level.

The project builds on work by consumer organisations to raise the alarm on this unfair food prices, using their detailed knowledge of the challenges facing consumers, statutory links to competition authorities, and experience and knowledge of food price monitoring and reporting – all of which will be scaled up through the project.

The overall objective of this project is to build the evidence base on unfair food prices; to engage competition authorities with this evidence, and support the development of solutions; and to generate public demand for action, through multi-stakeholder alliances and consumer-facing campaigns.

About the assignment

Ghana, like many other countries, faces significant challenges in achieving fair food prices. Fluctuating food prices affect the livelihoods of both farmers and consumers. Farmers often receive inadequate compensation for their hard work, while consumers grapple with the economic burden of rising food costs. Anti-competitive practices and unfair pricing are part of the cause of these rising prices; using strategic advocacy, and collaboration, this campaign seeks to create heightened awareness of the impact of food inflation achieve a fairer and more equitable food pricing system in Ghana to significantly reduce food inflation.

The Consumer Advocacy Centre (CAC) and Laweh University College will collaborate to deliver activities related to the Consumer Voice for Fair Food Prices in Africa project. These activities (full details below) will focus on food price collection and monitoring, and communications actions to promote findings to media, consumers, and key stakeholders.

Activities

Building the evidence base on fair food prices

- *Utilising the fair food prices monitoring tool developed by Consumers International in partnership with the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy.* The Consumers International team will provide training to further familiarise members with this tool, after which members will be expected to input price data (provided by national statistical authorities and international agencies) on a monthly basis; and to prepare monthly 'evidence briefings' based on the outputs.
- *Collecting food price data at retail, wholesale, and/or farmgate level.* Members will provide input to support the development of a standardised methodology for collecting food price data at various points throughout the value chain, and eventually take the lead in collecting this data, as per the activities outlined in the expression of interest.

Convening competition authorities and other stakeholders

- *Supporting and attending high-level meetings on fair food prices.* Consumers International is preparing to organise a high-level meeting in each focus country in November, bringing consumer advocates together with minister/secretary-level authorities from government departments including competition, trade, economy/finance, and agriculture. Members will provide support in co-ordinating these meetings, including by engaging government authorities and participating in the sessions.
- *Convening stakeholder coalitions.* With support from the Consumers International team, members will take the lead in convening a coalition of key stakeholders (for instance farmer associations; business associations; civil society groups working on food prices and food/nutrition security; academia; media) interested in promoting fair food prices. This will involve mapping and engaging key stakeholders; arranging virtual coalition meetings; and preparing communications outputs on behalf of these coalitions.

Generating demand for action

- *Advocating to government.* Using and adapting the materials provided by Consumers International, members will share regular advocacy letters with key government authorities, highlighting monthly evidence briefings.
- *Delivering media coverage.* With support from the Consumers International team, members will prepare regular press releases and opinion pieces on the topic of fair food prices, to secure coverage in prominent national media channels across priority platforms (print media, digital media, TV, radio, other).
- *Engaging consumers directly.* With support from the Consumers International team, members will share updates on this issue with their own network (where this exists), and via partners engaged in the stakeholder coalition.

Target deliverables

- Monthly evidence briefs based on food price monitoring tool (November, December, January);
- Monthly reporting on collected food price data (November, December, January), aiming to include prices across at least six commodities, and multiple locations at different stages of the value chain (to be defined together with research partner);
- A high-level meeting of consumer groups and government authorities in Accra in November, with at least five senior government officials in attendance;
- At least one virtual stakeholder meeting to share evidence on unfair food prices;
- Monthly email updates to key stakeholders to share latest evidence and actions related to unfair food prices;
- At least one wave of advocacy letters to relevant government authorities, highlighting relevant evidence and sharing calls to action on unfair food prices;
- At least 6 TV/radio presentations sharing evidence and findings from this project;
- At least 3 print media articles sharing evidence and findings;
- At least 3 press releases shared with a wide range of media contacts;
- At least three consumer workshops sharing findings directly with target communities.

Dates

- Start Date: 9th October 2023
- Duration of Assignment: October 2023 – January 2024