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**A Decision Support Tool Integrating Evidence into More Cost-Effective Humanitarian & Development Food Assistance**

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**Objectives/aims**

Funded by USAID Food for Peace (FFP) Office, the Food Aid Quality Review (FAQR) Project at Tufts created a Decision Support Tool application for programming a growing variety of specialized nutritious food products (e.g. Ready-to-Use Foods and Fortified Blended Foods) to achieve greater impact among populations vulnerable to undernutrition in humanitarian and development contexts. The interactive tool aims to advance more cost-effective food assistance through translation of evidence to facilitate program decisions. It supports funders from USAID/FFP and implementers in partner organizations to better access evidence, comprehend its relevance, and integrate it into decision-making.

**Methods**

The Decision Support Tool’s conceptual framework was developed to guide users through a range of program, cost, and impact parameters that are crucial to cost-effectiveness. Based on the user’s selection of these parameters, algorithms were programmed to calculate a list of cost and cost-effectiveness indicators. To guide user input, available data and references are supplied via interactive text and visualization. Examples of data sources include USAID historical cost databases, literature on coverage and health outcomes, and other relevant guidance. Additional features allow sensitivity analyses to compare across multiple scenarios. The interface was built in the Shiny package in R.

**Main findings**

Throughout the Decision Support Tool development phase, user feedback from USAID/FFP and implementation partners was gathered and incorporated. Users have appreciated the evidence-guided tool framework and the interactive interface, and welcomed its usability in supporting their work. We are working with funders and implementers to facilitate tool usage for both program development and capacity building/training purposes. Building an interactive application via Shiny was found to be a feasible option for researchers who are looking to develop more user-friendly tools that bridge the gap between existing evidence and its use by funders, implementers, and other stakeholders.