Q. Now that the updated Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS) has been published, what are the next steps?

- Following the launch of the updated GFSS, the interagency will embark on the Feed the Future (FTF) target country selection process. This process is expected to take place from approximately October 2021 through March 2022.
- We will also begin updating the GFSS target country plans and GFSS activity design guidance (formerly called technical guidance). New target countries will write new GFSS country plans.
- Separately, we are updating the Global Food Security Research Strategy, which will be finalized in early 2022. This strategy guides our investments in innovative agricultural research under FTF with a wide array of partners, including American and foreign research universities, think tanks and other key partners.

Q. How does the updated GFSS impact FTF country selection and will this include expanding the list of FTF target countries?

- We are expanding the list of target countries and we expect country selections to be announced this spring.
- During the selection process, we will not eliminate any of the current target countries, but rather add to the existing ones. This means none of the current target countries will be included in our data analysis. This decision is based on recent data from the World Bank that suggests—due to effects of the global pandemic—millions of people in FTF target countries are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, making it difficult to evaluate a country’s progress. Therefore, the United States has put a pause on target country graduation reviews and will only be adding new countries.
- The 12 current target countries are: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda.
- The list of new target countries will be determined based on quantitative and qualitative data aligned to the country selection criteria outlined in the Global Food Security Act of 2016 (GFSA).

Q. What is the difference between FTF target and aligned countries?

- Target country designation provides a formal opportunity to bring together the various United States Government agencies in-country and ensure activities are integrated and aligned under one GFSS

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“country plan,” increasing our ability to achieve lasting impact. This engagement begins with contextual analysis and drafting of the target country plan.

- FTF target countries are the flagship bilateral investments of FTF and some key characteristics set them apart from aligned countries. FTF's topline goals are reducing poverty, hunger and stunting. Of course, the global need is significant, but we have to be strategic, so target countries are where we think we can really move the needle forward. In order to achieve this together, a few things happen:
  - We advocate for target countries to have larger budgets.
  - We focus additional technical assistance toward those countries.
  - Target countries develop an interagency target country plan outlining the interagency’s shared responsibility to implement the GFSS and report on a subset of indicators as applicable.
  - Target countries include a “zone of influence,” which is a defined geography where FTF focuses its efforts (based on need and opportunity) and measures its impact.
  - Target countries share common goals of reducing poverty and stunting and building resilience and report against a common results framework (included in the updated GFSS) and set of indicators.

- Target countries are held to a higher standard of performance reporting by measuring impact at the population level in the zone of influence to determine whether our efforts are helping to reduce extreme poverty, hunger and childhood stunting and wasting over the life of the strategy.

- Of course, there are strategic, foreign policy and need-based reasons why the FTF interagency is engaged in food security work in many other countries that are not target countries. That will not change.

- **Aligned countries** include any countries with FTF investments.

- **We will continue to have FTF aligned countries**, which are encouraged to align their programming to the GFSS as appropriate and feasible given their level of funding, but they are not required to do so. Aligned countries are required to report results and out-year targets annually but are not mandated to meet the specific requirements that target countries are responsible for.

**Q. Have any of the current 12 FTF countries graduated from the initiative? How does the updated GFSS affect country graduation?**

- The interagency paused the annual target country graduation reviews due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- We are closely monitoring the evolving impacts of the pandemic on poverty and hunger in our target countries to determine if the pause on target country graduation reviews should be extended for another year.

- The World Bank recently produced very sobering forecasts that show millions of people in our target countries are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, which makes it difficult to evaluate a country’s progress toward potential graduation.

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Q. What are the budget implications of adding new FTF target countries?

- While we continue to advocate for additional resources for FTF across the interagency community, we are also analyzing how we can better focus and concentrate our existing resource envelope.
- In many instances, the countries under consideration already have large FTF portfolios that can be increased over time.
- We also want to ensure we are fully leveraging the capabilities and resources of the entire FTF interagency by layering, integrating and sequencing the full complement of our programming.
- We are committed to ensuring our target countries are robustly funded and provided with the resources to meet the increased expectations around performance and accountability.

Q. What is the selection criteria for identifying new target countries?

- As mandated by the GFSA, the interagency will use a set of indicators aligned to the six selection criteria:
  1. Level of need.
  2. Potential for agricultural-led growth.
  3. Opportunities for partnership.
  4. Opportunities for regional economic integration.
  5. United States Government resource availability.
- The GFSA does not define how these selection factors should be used, nor does it put more weight or emphasis on any single selection factor. We are incorporating lessons learned from the last round of country selection to identify quantitative and qualitative data to inform our analysis and decision-making around each of these selection factors.
- We will use criteria to evaluate countries that meet the World Bank Income Classification for lower and lower-middle income countries, which will result in a short list of countries for further consideration.

Q: What does the FTF target country expansion process look like?

- For a full overview of the FTF target country expansion process, please see the fact sheet on the FTF website.

Q: Will selected countries be required to develop country plans?

- Yes. Current target countries will update their plans to align with the updated GFSS, and new countries will go through the process to develop a new plan.
Q. In the new round of GFSS country plans, what additional topics should be covered?
   
   - We are currently updating the guidance for the next round of country plans.
   - GFSS country plans will align with the policy and programmatic priorities and guidance in the updated GFSS.

Q. The recent identification of nutrition priority countries made use of a “nutrition index.” Will this same index be used for GFSS-R country selection?

   - No, the nutrition index developed for identifying nutrition priority countries will not be used for GFSS target country selection. Rather, FTF target country selection will use the prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years old in addition to other appropriate indicators.

Q: How will performance in past FTF projects affect potential re-selection of countries such as Liberia, Malawi, Zambia, etc.?

   - For countries that make the short list and are reviewed under Phase Two, past performance and learning will be part of the “opportunity” analysis of the selection criteria. We will engage with interagency staff in-country directly while also reviewing the available evidence we already have.

Last updated: January 2022