Evaluation of the Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition
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Acronyms and abbreviations

CAADP  Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CFS    Committee on World Food Security
CPF    Country Programming Framework
ENACT  Education for Effective Nutrition in Action
ENAF   Education Nutritionnelle en Afrique Francophone
FAO    Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBDG   Food Based Dietary Guidelines
FSN    Food Security and Nutrition
ICN2   Second International Conference on Nutrition
IFAD   International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI  International Food Policy Research Institute
IPC    Integrated Phase Classification
MDD-W  Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women Indicator
NCD    Non-communicable Disease
NSA    Nutrition-sensitive Agriculture
PWB    Programme of Work and Budget
SDG    Sustainable Development Goal
SO     Strategic Objective
UNICEF United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
UNSCN  United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition
WFP    World Food Programme
WHO    World Health Organization
Glossary

Diet
The kind of food that a person habitually eats. The word ‘diet’ often implies some specific nutritional intake for health or weight-management reasons (with the two often related). Each culture and each person holds some food preferences or some food taboos and individual dietary choices may be more or less healthy.

Diet-related non-communicable disease (NCD)
A medical condition or disease that is non-infectious and non-transmissible among people, caused or aggravated by risk factors strongly associated to diet (e.g. obesity, hyperglycaemia, elevated blood lipids and hypertension). As a result of the ‘nutrition transition’ (see below), NCDs have emerged as the leading cause of human mortality and morbidity in low-, middle- and high-income countries. The major diet-related NCDs are cardiovascular diseases and diabetes mellitus (DM).

Food-based approaches
Nutritional approaches that focus on food – natural, processed, fortified or in combination – as the primary means for improving the quality of the diet and for overcoming and preventing malnutrition and nutritional deficiencies. These approaches recognize the essential role of food for good nutrition and the importance of the systems involved in the production, trade, retail and transformation of food to determine the “food environment” of consumers.

Food system
All the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.

Micronutrient deficiencies
Lack of one or more of the micronutrients required for health. They include both vitamin deficiencies and mineral deficiencies.

Nutrition transition
The transition of many developing countries from traditional diets high in cereal and fibre to more Western pattern diets high in sugars, fat and animal-source food, often associated with a rise in dietary non-communicable disease (NCD).

Obesity
Abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that may impair health. According to WHO, a BMI (Body Mass Index – weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters) greater than or equal to 30 is obesity.

Overweight
Abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that may impair health. According to WHO, a BMI (Body Mass Index – weight
in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters) greater than or equal to 25 is overweight.

**Stunting**

Condition of children, aged 0 to 59 months, whose height for age is below minus two standard deviations (moderate and severe stunting) and minus three standard deviations (severe stunting) from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards. It measures chronic malnutrition.

**Triple burden of malnutrition**

Coexistence of (i) undernutrition along with (ii) overweight and obesity, or diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and with (iii) micronutrient deficiencies (hidden hunger), within individuals, households and populations, and across the life course.

**Wasting**

Condition of children, aged 0 to 59 months, whose weight for age is below minus two standard deviations (moderate and severe wasting) and minus three standard deviations (severe stunting) from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards. It measures acute malnutrition.
Executive summary

Summary

1. At the request of the Programme Committee at its 121st session in March 2017, the Office of Evaluation (OED) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) undertook an evaluation of the Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition, six years after its adoption in 2012.

2. The objectives of the evaluation were to: a) assess progress achieved in the implementation of the Strategy, especially towards mainstreaming nutrition into FAO's own work and thinking; b) examine how the Strategy, the reviewed Strategic Framework and associated delivery mechanisms have helped FAO to focus and improve its work in nutrition-sensitive food and agricultural systems; c) provide strategic recommendations for FAO at all levels to further mainstream nutrition in the work of the Organization and increase the contribution of food and agricultural systems to nutrition. The evaluated period was 2012-2018.

3. The Nutrition Strategy was meant to directly contribute to the achievement of FAO's Strategic Objective (SO) 1 "eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition", and its evaluation was coordinated with the evaluation of Strategic Objective 1 conducted in 2017-2018. The evaluation scope purposefully excludes the FAO work on Codex and food safety.

Background

4. The policy environment has changed considerably since the Strategy was developed. Driven by the rapid increase of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in countries associated with the double/triple burden of malnutrition, there is an increasing recognition among Member States that effective strategies to address malnutrition must go beyond nutrition-specific interventions and include modifying food environments, particularly the most obesogenic one. This message was re-enforced by the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) organized jointly by FAO and the World Health Organizations (WHO) in November 2014, and in September 2015 the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), at least eight of which are strongly linked to nutrition.

5. Many new actors and initiatives have entered the nutrition 'landscape' during the last few years, such as the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, the REACH partnership, Nutrition for Growth (N4G), the Global Nutrition Report (GNR) and the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition. Multiple private initiatives also emerged. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) were reformed, with the UNSCN Secretariat moving back from Geneva to Rome in 2016. In FAO, nutrition was also increasingly being addressed in FAO Council and FAO Conferences, as well as FAO technical and high-level committees on, for example, Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Commodities Problems, as well as in the CFS.

Relevance of the Strategy

6. The evaluation concludes that the Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition strengthened FAO's commitment to this hitherto neglected part of its mandate. So far these challenges have predominantly been approached through direct nutrition interventions mainly implemented in the health sector; yet improving diets through better agriculture and food systems (so-called food-based approaches) potentially offers more sustainable solutions to all forms of malnutrition.
In practice, a number of factors have detracted from the Strategy’s relevance as a guiding framework. The reviewed Strategic Framework, endorsed in 2013, brought a new approach to programming and budgeting. Five Strategic Programmes were designed in 2014, and Strategic Programme teams set-up in 2015. Nutrition was reflected in the reviewed Strategic Framework initially as a part of Strategic Objective 1 on the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, and since January 2016, as a cross-cutting theme mainstreamed in the work of all Strategic Objectives and described in organizational Outcome 6.5.

The organization of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (November 2014) jointly with WHO was a major achievement during the evaluated period, leading to participating governments endorsing the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and its Framework for Action. This was followed by strong FAO support to the development of the 2030 Agenda and informing the tracking of targets for Sustainable Development Goal 2, which enshrines the objective of “ending all forms of malnutrition”. The proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 in April 2016 built upon this, with the aim to “achieve Global Nutrition and diet-related NCD targets by 2025 and contributing to the realization of the SDGs by 2030”.

These developments resulted in FAO broadening the scope of its attention to overweight and obesity, in addition to undernutrition, which was the primary focus of the Nutrition Strategy. This change in FAO’s focus, officially acted in the Medium Term Plan 2018-21, has clearly strengthened the relevance of FAO’s nutrition work in high-income and upper middle-income countries, but it also means that the Nutrition Strategy is now partly obsolete, in stating that “undernutrition, including micronutrient deficiencies, should remain FAO’s primary focus.”

Critically, the Strategy failed to address operational issues in sufficient depth and lacked an accountability framework with agreed upon indicators and reporting processes, which would have periodically reminded the Organization of the Strategy, as was the case with the “minimum standards” of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality that was developed during the same period. This certainly reduced the visibility, viability and authority of the Nutrition Strategy as a guiding document within FAO. As a result, the Strategy came to be “crowded out”, superseded as a guiding tool by more recent documents as explained above.

Human and financial resources for nutrition

The FAO organizational set-up for nutrition was restructured twice during the evaluation period, in 2013 and 2016. In 2013, the former Nutrition and Consumer Protection division (AGN) under the Agriculture Department separated from the Codex and food safety group and moved to the Economic and Social Development Department (ES). In 2016, the Nutrition Division merged with the agribusiness specialists, food technologists and food value chains professionals from the ex-AGS division and became the Nutrition and Food Systems Division (current ESN). These changes signalled a greater recognition of the importance of nutrition within the Organization. However, the synergies that were hoped for between the ex-AGS staff and the rest of the division have yet to fully materialize.

Nutrition-related work areas in the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) show a modest increased allocation of assessed contributions for nutrition over the evaluation period. However, the core budget allocations for ESN as a percentage of FAO total regular budget have dropped from 1.5 percent in 2012-2013 to 1.2 percent in 2018-2019. A review of posts allocations indicates that ESN has currently a comparable level of professional posts (30) as AGN used to have in 2012-2013 (28), while the number of General Staff posts has been halved from 18 to 9 over the same period. However, PWB posts are not necessarily filled with
actual regular programme staff. In fact ESN has had a number of vacancies, which it used to hire human resources on a short-term basis through consultancy contracts. As of February 2018, ESN had seven vacant posts. A significant number of key historical staff have left FAO/ESN over the evaluated period, either because they retired, joined another organization or moved to a field position. This phenomenon has qualitatively affected ESN’s technical capacity in that the departing staff had accumulated substantial institutional knowledge and memory.

13 In addition to headquarters staff, there are 12 nutrition professionals posted in Regional and Subregional Offices. Many of these professionals cover food safety issues as well as nutrition, as they were established under AGN when the two functions were in the same technical unit. During the evaluation period, the capacity of Regional and Subregional Offices to backstop Country Offices in nutrition has been built to a significant extent, and to good effect on the field programme. In the current decentralized model, technical support to Country Offices is the responsibility of Regional and Subregional Offices. Headquarters units as well as Regional and Country Offices also frequently hire nutrition consultants, e.g. as part of national or regional projects funded out of voluntary contributions.

14 FAO’s nutrition capacity is now spread across the globe and the expertise and experience of this team needs to be harnessed in innovative ways. The report recommends the development of an organization-wide network for knowledge exchange on nutrition-sensitive approaches. Current efforts in this direction should be expanded to help teams at headquarters and the different regions learn from each other, including horizontal learning from region to region.

15 Despite the increase in the number of nutrition staff in Regional, Subregional and Country Offices (often funded out of voluntary contributions), most decentralized offices remain under-equipped, resulting in insufficient attendance by senior FAO staff and representatives in dedicated country-level coordination platforms, and weak resource mobilization capacity and visibility in nutrition. Human resources and skill sets are insufficient both to meet this growing demand and to cope with the challenges of a relatively new area of work requiring new skills and practical experience, e.g. in inter-sectoral policy dialogue, planning and programming, and relations with the private sector.

16 The absence of a corporate resource mobilization instrument on nutrition is a major lacuna that has slowed the Organization’s ability to address the double/triple burden in a broad and sustained manner. A nutrition trust fund set-up by FAO after the ICN2 Conference was never promoted to donors and never accrued to. As a result, FAO lacks resources to fund what essentially amounts to a whole new area of work, and ESN has had to absorb an increase in the scope of its work all the while losing some key staff resources. The “strong focus on nutrition across the Organization” recommended by the 2011 nutrition evaluation called for a vigorous resource mobilization effort, or it would have come at the expense of other areas of work that Member States would probably consider just as important as nutrition.

17 Member Countries increasingly associate FAO with nutrition, as evidenced by their requests and priorities expressed during the 2016 round of Regional Conferences, but FAO does not always have the capacity to respond to their demands. The modest build-up of country-level capacities and support over the recent years has been recognized and appreciated by Member Nations, stakeholders and partners, but they still expect much more from FAO.

18 The lack of corporate-wide approach to nutrition extends to monitoring and evaluation, which is not systematically pursued in FAO nutrition-sensitive programmes. As a consequence, FAO is not in a position to rigorously test its approaches to nutrition, identify
unintended consequences, showcase its best contributions and advocate for food system approaches.

Overview of results achieved

19 The Strategy was originally developed in response to an earlier evaluation carried out in 2010-2011, which concluded that nutrition was a central but neglected part of the Organization’s mandate. The 2011 evaluation put forward 14 recommendations, whose degree of implementation the present evaluation attempts to assess. Those 2011 recommendations about the drafting of the Nutrition Strategy, the mainstreaming of nutrition into the FAO Strategic Framework and structural changes in the Nutrition Division were fully implemented. Those related to mainstreaming of nutrition in the field programme and policy work of the Organization have seen slow progress. Insufficient progress was noted on recommendations to raising FAO’s engagement and visibility in nutrition-related networks, notably at country level. The general picture is that FAO’s main achievements in nutrition to date relate to advocacy and sensitization at the global level, more so than to the actual delivery of tested approaches and capacities in the field.

20 Clearly, the Second International Conference on Nutrition convened in Rome from 19 to 21 November 2014 by FAO and WHO was by all account a resounding success. The resulting Rome Declaration on Nutrition and Framework for Action significantly raised food-based approaches to nutrition in the eyes of the world’s political, strategic and programme leaders. The Conference also established FAO’s standing in the global playing field for nutrition. Following ICN2, external stakeholders have increasingly recognized FAO’s contribution to tracing the linkages between food systems and nutritional outcomes.

21 FAO has further promoted the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025, as well as supported the development of the 2030 Agenda and informing the tracking of SDG2 targets. Thanks to the Decade, nutrition is for the first time a standing item for discussion every two years at the UN General Assembly. FAO and WHO were mandated to lead with the implementation of the Decade and to develop a work programme for the Nutrition Decade in collaboration with other UN Agencies. FAO was also successful in hosting and relaunching the UNSCN at FAO headquarters, providing mutual benefits and access to a wide range of food system experts.

22 Significant work on governance has taken place in Latin America on school meal programmes, food systems and obesity prevention, in Asia through the promotion of crop and diet diversity, and in Africa within the context of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the Malabo Declaration, with some promising effects. FAO has helped to strengthen countries’ capacity for mainstreaming nutrition in their national agriculture and food security investment plans. There has also been a wide array of interesting capacity building projects implemented since the Strategy was promulgated, but they seem weakly related to the Nutrition Strategy and cannot be directly attributed to it.

23 Modest progress has been achieved in evidence building at country level. The Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) Indicator has been gaining recognition but has only been piloted in few countries so far.

24 FAO’s technical guidance on nutrition-sensitive approaches was assessed in some detail. A large increase in FAO’s nutrition-related publications is noted over the evaluated period, as well as an effort to translate more publications into various languages and to develop more integrated packages of publications targeted at different audiences. FAO knowledge products are highly relevant in the context of emerging nutrition challenges, giving attention
to all forms of nutrition, and are generally perceived as extremely favourable by stakeholders, particularly the key recommendations for improving nutrition through agriculture and food systems and the toolkit on nutrition-sensitive agriculture (NSA) and food systems. Nonetheless, the food systems approach is a wider concept than nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and still requires a clearer articulation. This sequence of achievements at global level was followed by the International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition in 2016 and subsequent five similar regional symposiums held during 2017 to promote food-based approaches to addressing malnutrition and advocate for a stronger integration of nutrition in agriculture. The symposiums both at global and regional levels brought together the resources of different levels of the Organization, with excellent collaboration between ESN, Regional Offices and the Office for Corporate Communication (OCC), to help operationalize the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition.

**Mainstreaming of nutrition in FAO**

25 The extent to which nutrition was mainstreamed in the five Strategic Programmes, the regional initiatives, country programmes and the work of other technical units was found to vary a great deal. ESN’s collaboration with other FAO units often appears ad hoc and often insufficient to promote systematic nutrition mainstreaming. The corporate approach to mainstreaming was formalized only recently, through the publication in September 2018 of the “Pillars of action and institutional arrangements” document. Available guidance for project formulation and to mainstream nutrition in the Country Programming Framework (CPF) cycle is brief and well-conceived, but the country office backstopping systems put in place by the other two Rome-based agencies (International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD and World Food Programme, WFP) are far more ambitious and comprehensive.

**Partnerships**

26 Strong partnerships were promoted and are coming out of the ICN2 International Conference and under the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, particularly with WHO. Links have been tied with the academia for analytical work, or to help African universities develop their own nutrition courses (Education for Effective Nutrition in Action, ENACT/Éducation Nutritionnelle en Afrique Francophone, ENAF curriculum).

27 Regional economic communities and groups as well as regional parliamentary forums were found useful entry points for policy support and advocacy. Many partnerships were built at the regional level, with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO) in Latin America; with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in the Caribbean; with the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Africa; and with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Asia.

28 FAO’s contributions to multi-stakeholder coordination platforms on nutrition, notably SUN and REACH, remain insufficient at both the global and national levels to promote food-based approaches to nutrition. The institutional disconnect between Ministries of Agriculture and Ministries of Health and between the corresponding UN agencies is still present in many countries.
Conclusions

29 In conclusion, FAO’s involvement in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and later food systems for nutrition has grown significantly and evolved qualitatively since the Strategy was promulgated. The field programme related to nutrition has more than doubled since the promulgation of the Strategy, and has evolved towards more deliberate efforts to address all forms of malnutrition. There also has been a surge in the development of knowledge products and in the number of events attended. From a relatively low base, the Organization has built a more visible presence in this domain and has brought to bear significant analytical strengths to document and advocate for food-based approaches to nutrition. Nutrition was introduced as a cross-cutting theme in the FAO Strategic Framework and has started to be mainstreamed in the work of all Strategic Programmes.

30 There is now considerable global attention being paid to the need to advance food-based approaches in order to effectively tackle the global burden of malnutrition, inside and outside FAO. ICN2 was a seminal moment, which has started to shape FAO’s Nutrition Agenda. The adoption of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition by the United Nations General Assembly in April 2016, with its work programme co-lead by FAO and WHO, provides a strong platform for political engagement.

31 Overall, FAO was found well positioned to define and advocate for improvements in all forms of malnutrition through integrated and food-based approaches, food systems and sustainable and healthy diets. It has the mandate and the global, regional and national reach required to lead the way in piloting food-based approaches to nutrition, including access to CFS and UNSCN. It can rely on significant strengths: a long experience in the relevant technical sectors, the right tools and indicators, highly motivated teams, and relations in general good standing with all relevant partner institutions including resource partners.

32 FAO has had difficulties in occupying that space and defining clear priorities for engagement on food systems for nutrition, thus inviting puzzlement, frustration and also competition from other stakeholders. Its positioning is not always clear to partners, which points to insufficient communication on simple and clear entry points to be used by FAO in this space. It must be stressed that food-based approaches to nutrition are completely different from health-based approaches. They call for different entry points and beneficiaries, different time frames and different monitoring systems than direct nutrition interventions.

Recommendations

33 The evaluation makes seven broad recommendations, oriented towards giving a new thrust to FAO’s work in nutrition, first through the elaboration of a new strategy taking stock of all the policy and strategic changes that occurred during the evaluated period and communicating clearly FAO’s role and ‘niche’ in support of nutrition-sensitive food systems. Over time, other documents and strategies have quite naturally come to guide FAO’s work in nutrition, such as the ICN2 outcome document or the Decade of Action work programme. However, these are global frameworks that do not easily translate into an operational plan for any particular organization, and therefore do not substitute for an FAO-wide framework on nutrition promotion and mainstreaming.

34 FAO must recommit to this part of its Agenda, including at the highest level. It must also retool, if it wants its strategic pronouncements to translate into reality. The new strategy should have a clear accountability framework to provide FAO with the indicators and reporting channels necessary to monitor and report on its growing nutrition-sensitive involvement. Current efforts towards mainstreaming nutrition in country programmes should
be more vigorously pursued. To this effect, a set of tools is proposed, including a ‘nutrition marker’ to flag nutrition-sensitive projects, and dedicated country assessments of food systems linkages with nutrition, to be inserted in the CPF preparation process, so as to give FAO teams in country the analytical material necessary to identify programmatic entry points and engage credibly and productively on this issue with its national and international partners at country level.

Strengthened coordination and collaboration with nutrition stakeholders is also recommended, e.g. with the UN Network for SUN for greater country-level outreach and ICN2 follow-up, with UNSCN for global policy convergence and knowledge sharing, with the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (GLOPAN) for global advocacy and with universities and research centres to generate evidence for food-based approaches to nutrition.
1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1 This evaluation of the Strategy and Vision for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation’s (FAO’s) Work in Nutrition (hereafter referred to as ‘the Nutrition Strategy’ or ‘the Strategy’) was requested by the Programme Committee at its 121st session in March 2017,¹ to take stock of progress achieved by the Organization in implementing the Nutrition Strategy endorsed by the FAO Programme Committee at the end of 2012 (PC 112/2).

2 The purpose of the evaluation was to assess whether and how the Strategy has been implemented so far, and equally to guide effective action towards the sustainable reduction of malnutrition in the coming years. This latter “formative” focus was expected to be useful given that the Strategy has never had a detailed implementation plan and the policy environment in nutrition-sensitive agriculture (NSA) has changed considerably since the Strategy was developed, as explained in section 2.2.

3 Since the Nutrition Strategy was meant to directly contribute to the achievement of FAO’s Strategic Objective (SO) 1 “eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition”, then under formulation, its evaluation was coordinated with the evaluation of Strategic Objective 1 conducted in 2017-2018. However, the present report takes all of FAO’s Strategic Objectives into careful consideration, as FAO’s work in nutrition contributes to achieving them all.

1.2 Objectives and scope

4 The objectives of the evaluation were to:

a. Assess progress achieved in the implementation of the Strategy and Vision of FAO’s Work in Nutrition, especially towards mainstreaming nutrition into FAO’s own work and thinking, promoting food and agricultural systems governance for nutrition, increasing knowledge and evidence to maximize their impacts on nutrition, and strengthening capacities at all levels for effective action.

b. Examine how the Strategy, the reviewed Strategic Framework and associated delivery mechanisms have helped FAO to focus and improve the relevance, strategic positioning and effectiveness of FAO’s contribution to tackling malnutrition through nutrition-sensitive food and agricultural systems.

c. Based on the above, provide strategic recommendations for FAO at all levels – headquarters, regions and countries – to further mainstream nutrition in the work of the Organization and increase the contribution of food and agricultural systems to nutrition.

5 By taking stock of progress achieved, the evaluation highlights some of the positive work conducted so far and identifies potential gaps as well as resources and capacity bottlenecks, with a view to offer concrete orientations on the next steps in FAO’s work in nutrition.

6 The reference framework is composed of the Nutrition Strategy itself, as well as the new Strategic Framework 2010-2019 endorsed by the FAO Conference in June 2013 and reviewed during 2016-2017, where the work of the Organization on nutrition is mostly contained in

Strategic Objective 1 “Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition” as well as in Objective 6, Outcome 6.5 regarding nutrition mainstreaming in all Strategic Objectives.

The FAO Nutrition Strategy was developed in response to an earlier evaluation of FAO’s work in nutrition carried out in 2010-2011, which concluded that nutrition, while central to the Organization’s mandate, suffered from a lack of vision for FAO’s role in nutrition, insufficient prioritization in strategies, programmes and workplans, and inadequate coordination across technical areas. The 2011 evaluation put forward 14 recommendations to improve the relevance and effectiveness of FAO’s work in nutrition and to clarify its role in the international nutrition architecture, including the articulation of a “vision and strategy for FAO’s contribution to nutrition-sensitive agricultural development.” The present evaluation attempts to take stock of how consistently the recommendations agreed to in the Management Response for the 2011 evaluation were implemented.

The primary intended users of this evaluation are: a) FAO Management and staff at all levels, in particular the Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN), the Economic and Social Development Department (ES), the Strategic Programme teams at FAO headquarters and the regional and country offices; and b) FAO Member Countries and partners, donors of FAO’s work in nutrition, as well as other actors directly involved in implementing the Strategy. Secondary users may include the broader community involved in nutrition at global, regional and country levels, including parliamentarians, civil society organizations and those participating in the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement.

The evaluation scope encompasses all FAO initiatives and/or products that specifically target nutrition concerns, irrespective of the source of funding and the location of their management (headquarters, regional or country offices), since the adoption of the Nutrition Strategy in 2012.

Certain nutrition-related themes deserving specific attention as to how they have been integrated in normative and capacity development work were identified during the scoping phase, as follows: impact of agriculture and food systems on consumption, diets and nutrition; urban nutrition; interaction with the private sector; response to obesity/overweight issues; review of policies/integration of nutrition in sectoral policies and policy coherence.

Following a recommendation of the last evaluation, Codex and food safety/quality were separated from Nutrition in the FAO organigram at the end of 2012, as reflected in the move of the core of nutrition expertise to the ES Department. Therefore, this evaluation scope purposefully excludes a detailed evaluation of the FAO work on Codex and food safety, and contents itself with reviewing how collaboration between the concerned divisions in AG and ES have helped explore opportunities for nutrition mainstreaming.

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3 The relevant recommendation (accepted in the Management Response) was to separate Nutrition from Codex and Food Safety because “the cohabitation of Codex, food safety and nutrition did not translate into stronger linkages and [...] has been a major distraction from generating a multi-dimensional understanding of the factors that affect human nutrition and an obstacle to developing an inter-disciplinary approach to address malnutrition”.

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1.3 Methodology

12 The evaluation started in November 2017 with an extensive scoping phase that included: i) an extensive literature review; ii) consultation with staff from the FAO Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN) and Office of Evaluation (OED); iii) interviews with FAO staff and former staff as well as with key actors within the international nutrition architecture from UN and independent experts working on the distinctive relationship between agriculture, food and nutrition; iv) a preliminary screening of FAO’s nutrition-related projects operational in 2012-2017 using the Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS); v) a preliminary screening of the FAO normative products and key events relating to nutrition developed in the past six years; and vi) a “kick-off meeting” held on 15 December 2017 during which participants from ESN, Strategic Programmes representatives and nutrition staff in decentralized offices were consulted to define the focus and specific questions for the evaluation and collect suggestions for key partner organizations and informants.

13 A set of evaluation questions was developed on this basis and is presented in detail in Box 1 below. They are organized under the following overall questions:

- **Relevance** – to needs at the global, regional, subregional and country levels.

- **Effectiveness** – is FAO’s work on nutrition achieving results?

- **Efficiency** – in terms of adequateness of work processes to support FAO’s work in nutrition.

- **Strategic positioning** – FAO’s role and capacity to respond to needs, select appropriate entry points and forge productive partnerships.

14 The methodology was primarily based on semi-structured key informant interviews with FAO staff at country, subregional and regional level, governments and Regional Economic Communities, and other stakeholders including SUN, REACH, donors, research institutions, representatives of civil society organizations and other international organizations working on nutrition. A list of persons consulted in this evaluation is presented in Appendix 1.

15 An inventory of FAO’s nutrition work at country level was developed based on an FPMIS query and the country office reporting database in the Programme Planning, Implementation Reporting and Evaluation Support System (PIRES), and further refined by contrasting and comparing it with the lists of nutrition-related projects identified by the ESN staff posted in regional and subregional offices. This allowed for an analysis of the evolution in terms of human and financial resources committed to nutrition in FAO since the Strategy was adopted. A smaller sample of 20 project documents identified as incorporating nutrition considerations in the 2012-2017 portfolio was desk-reviewed to assess the extent to which the FAO portfolio of projects is nutrition-sensitive.

16 This evaluation has been conducted in coordination with the SO1 evaluation. In particular, the evaluation of the Nutrition Strategy relies on the SO1 evaluation Country Case Studies (Brazil, Cambodia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal and Nigeria) and did not undertake specific, dedicated field visits. The main findings of various evaluation reports since 2012 on the work of FAO in nutrition were synthetized. Other evaluations concurrently undertaken by the Office of Evaluation (OED) also offered opportunities to generate learning on nutrition, e.g. that of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality, the Country Programme Evaluations (CPEs) for Burundi, Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Uganda, and a series of project evaluations.
Box 1: Evaluation Questions

A. Relevance – to needs at the global, regional, subregional and country levels.

a1. Relevance of the Strategy: Is the Nutrition Strategy comprehensive, and still relevant, given recent developments and emerging challenges in different regions (e.g. sufficient emphasis on micronutrient deficiency, nutrition transition and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), or urbanization)? Are the priorities the Strategy attempted to address still relevant/priority issues for Member States and to the 2030 global development Agenda? Is the focus on food systems useful, clear and sufficiently focussed? Are there useful new concepts or approaches that would deserve to be better reflected in the Strategy?

a2. Relevance of the areas of work: What priority issues are addressed through FAO’s work at global, regional and country levels? Was the work carried out by FAO on nutrition since 2012 aligned with the Strategy? Was it supportive of countries/regions priority needs? What entry points appear the most promising? Are there thematic or sectorial gaps?

B. Effectiveness – is FAO’s work on nutrition achieving results?

b1. Results achieved: What have been the major achievements and significant/influential areas of work under each of the Strategy’s outcomes? Is the work evolving in its extension and size? Is it evolving in its content towards better quality of design and better implementation? What were the success factors? What were the weaknesses? What was the balance of investments or efforts between global, regional and country level? Were there synergies between the different work streams and levels?

b2. Knowledge management: Is the implementation of the Strategy and results achieved monitored and reported upon? Is the work of FAO in nutrition systematized and documented? Are there key lessons learned and best practices from countries and regions that can serve to guide the action of FAO in nutrition in the future or in other regions or countries? Are normative products and the field programme building upon one another? Is FAO leveraging technologies and managing nutrition knowledge and expertise more effectively?

b3. Gender: How has gender mainstreaming been incorporated into nutrition programmes? What is the evidence for linkages between women’s empowerment and improved nutrition, focusing on access and utilization of food at the household level? How can it be factored into agriculture and food security interventions, and is this connection leveraged in FAO’s work?

C. Efficiency – in terms of adequateness of work processes to support FAO’s work in nutrition.

c1. Resources: How much additional resources (financial and human at global, regional and country level) were mobilized to implement the Strategy, or more broadly to provide nutrition-sensitive support to Member States? How are the capacities of FAO to deliver in nutrition at global, regional and country levels?

C2. Organizational set-up: Is the new configuration of ESN adequate to support nutrition work in the Organization, leading to greater synergies within ESN and to a better positioning of nutrition within FAO?

c3. Mainstreaming: To what extent is nutrition internalized as a cross-cutting theme in the mindsets of FAO staff? How did the delivery mechanisms of the new Strategic Framework mainstream nutrition themes and work? How efficient are the modalities of collaboration between ESN and the Strategic Programme teams, as well as with other technical units and decentralized offices?

D. Strategic positioning – capacity to respond to needs, select useful entry points and forge strong partnerships.

d1. Evolution since 2012: How consistently were the recommendations agreed to in the Management Response for the 2011 evaluation implemented? How has FAO’s position in the field of nutrition evolved since 2012 and what are the drivers? What was the follow-up to the 2014 ICN2 Conference and the Rome Declaration on Nutrition? Was the Nutrition Strategy disseminated inside and outside FAO at regional and country levels, and is it used to guide FAO’s intervention at country level? Are FAO Member States and partners supportive of the strategy and of a renewed focus on nutrition by FAO? How is FAO’s technical guidance on nutrition-sensitive agriculture perceived by key stakeholders?

D2. Comparative advantages: What are FAO’s areas of comparative advantage in this area? Is its role clear to other UN agencies, Member States and partners? Has FAO developed its capabilities and used its comparative advantages to a greater extent since the promulgation of the Strategy? Is FAO’s role and contribution to nutrition, particularly, its push for food systems approach, at global, regional and country levels visible and acknowledged?

D3. Partnerships: Has the network of partners FAO works with expanded over time since the inception of the Strategy (including governments, UN agencies, resource partners, civil society, private sector, academia, etc.)? What have been FAO’s contributions to the UN Network for SUN and REACH? To the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition? To multi-stakeholder arrangements and partnership agreements with UN agencies that have a mandate in nutrition? How effectively did FAO promote food-based approaches to nutrition in a domain generally dominated by health concerns?

D4. Communication: How have communication and knowledge management efforts between the country, region and headquarters levels helped propagate and institutionalize food systems approaches to nutrition?

D5. Leadership: Has FAO played effective leadership and strategically influenced the global, regional and country level agendas on how nutrition can be addressed through food systems? Has FAO created or seized opportunities to promote nutrition-sensitive food systems?
During the scoping phase, the evaluation team was asked to identify innovative approaches and key interventions required to reduce malnutrition in various contexts. To this end, the evaluation team reviewed the literature to establish an indicative inventory of known “pathways” from agriculture and food systems to nutrition, as a way to assess which pathways had been successfully exploited by FAO so far (Appendix 3).

Two internet questionnaire surveys were undertaken, the first to solicit feedback from FAO external partners and other institutions that collaborate with FAO on nutrition, and the second for FAO staff members, consultants, ex-staff and ex-consultants at headquarters, regional offices, subregional offices and country offices. The surveys were answered by 153 collaborators from partner institutions and 54 staff and consultants.

Finally, a structured critique of a sample of 37 FAO knowledge products (KPs) pertaining to nutrition, drawn from 168 nutrition-related KPs listed by ESN and developed between 2011 and 2018 was undertaken to assess the relevance, quality and uptake of the products as well as FAO’s role and contribution to global and regional debates on nutrition. The sampled KPs covered a wide range of topics and comprised a variety of formats (factsheets, policy brief, books, guidelines, comic strips, videos and e-learning courses).

1.4 Limitations

The Nutrition Strategy does not include a clear and coherent accountability framework, unlike the FAO Policy on Gender Equality and its “minimum standards”. This made it impossible to offer a structured and detailed review of the Strategy against set targets and success indicators. Therefore, the analysis presented in this report is essentially qualitative.

The evaluation budget was limited for such a global thematic evaluation (USD 60,000), making it impossible to supplement the SO1 case studies with additional country visits. In addition, due to unforeseen issues a team member could not join the mission schedule as originally planned, which required further adjustments also in terms of timing. This means that the description of results achieved at regional and country level should be taken as illustrative rather than exhaustive. In particular, nutrition-sensitive activities in protracted crises may be under-represented in this report because the country case studies for the SO1 evaluation purposefully excluded this kind of contexts.

1.5 Structure of the Report

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents the background of the project; Chapter 3 presents an overview of the Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition; an assessment of FAO’s contributions is presented in Chapter 4, according to relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Chapter 5 presents strategic positioning, while conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter 6.

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4 This review of nutrition-related knowledge products did not include the State of the World Food Insecurity series (SOFI), coordinated by the Economic and Social Development Department (ESD) and already reviewed in the SO1 evaluation.

2 Background

2.1 Nutrition trends in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) era

In the year 2015, marking the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) period, the FAO annual publication “the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World” (SOFI) highlighted that “a total of 72 developing countries out of 129, or more than half the countries monitored, have reached the MDG 1c hunger target” to halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The share of undernourished people in the world had decreased from 23.3 percent in 1990–1992 to 12.9 percent in 2015, meaning that MDG1c was essentially achieved at global level. However, SOFI 2015 noted that progress had been uneven across countries and regions – with Latin America, East and Southeast Asia, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and Northern and Western Africa making faster progress than other regions – as well as across time, with a marked acceleration of progress in the few years before the end of the MDG period.

Three years later, it appears that this MDG achievement is being compromised. Recent SOFI reports have signalled a reversal of trends, i.e. a rise in world hunger. In 2017 the number of undernourished people is estimated to have increased to 821 million – around one out of every nine people in the world. This number has returned to levels seen a decade ago. In addition to conflicts, climate change is among the key drivers behind the recent uptick in global hunger and one of the leading causes of severe food crises.

While some progress continues to be made in reducing child stunting, nearly 151 million children under five were affected by it in 2017. Wasting affects over 50 million children under five in the world. Two billion people lack key micronutrients like iron and vitamin A and one in three women of reproductive age in the world is anaemic. Concurrently, a combination of factors (economic growth, urbanization, reduction in physical activity and increase in sedentary lifestyles, as well as changing diets and notably an excessive reliance on processed foods) has led to what is sometimes described as a “global obesity pandemic”: more than one in eight adults in the world – or more than 672 million – is now obese. Increasing rates of obesity have in turn contributed to an escalation in related chronic diseases including diabetes, stroke, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and some forms of cancer.

This coexistence of over- and undernutrition in low- and middle-income countries has been captured in literature as the “nutrition transition”, the “double burden of nutrition” or even the “triple burden” (taking into account micronutrient deficiency). In 2018 the Global Nutrition Report estimated that, of 141 countries analysed, 88 percent (124 countries) experienced more than one form of malnutrition and 29 percent (41 countries) had high levels of all three forms. As a result, the report concluded, no country is currently on course to meet all the SDG targets pertaining to hunger and malnutrition. In particular, there is a risk of falling far short of achieving the ambitious SDG target of hunger eradication by 2030.

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9 SOFI 2018, op. cit.
In this context, there is an increasing recognition that health-focused interventions are not sufficient to make sustained progress on nutrition, and that effective strategies to address malnutrition must engage multiple sectors, with food systems and agriculture playing a key role. National and international actors have gone beyond so-called “nutrition-specific” initiatives such as micronutrient supplementation, the promotion of breastfeeding and complementary feeding, or the management of severe acute malnutrition. Greater attention is now being paid to multi-sectoral and so-called “nutrition-sensitive” approaches such as diversification of food production, food safety measures, or women economic empowerment.

2.2 A growing set of actors

During the last five years, many new actors and initiatives have entered the nutrition ‘landscape’ such as the SUN Movement, the REACH partnership, Nutrition for Growth (N4G), the Global Nutrition Report (GNR) and the Global Panell on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition. Multiple private initiatives also emerged. Other well-established ones have been reformed, such as the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) or the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Other well-established intergovernmental actors revamped or repositioned their activities towards nutrition, e.g. the World Health Assembly. The United Nations General Assembly also endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals, many of which are relevant to nutrition.10

In FAO, nutrition was also increasingly being addressed in FAO Council and FAO Conferences, as well as FAO technical and high-level Committees on, for example, Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Commodities Problems. The Committee on World Food Security endorsed in 2016 a strategy and vision to step up its contribution to the global fight against malnutrition. Prior to 2013, nutrition was not featured at the CFS; since then it has become a major stream of work, seen in side events and analysed in reports such as the report of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition presented at CFS44 (October 2017).

The body of literature on the role that agriculture plays in improving nutrition has increased exponentially, as have the calls from high-level panels for a stronger link between agriculture and nutrition.11 Since 2013-2014, a growing number of initiatives, networks and partnerships for nutrition have been strengthened, especially around sustainable food systems, with new emerging actors in the area.

Two major inflexion points for FAO’s role in nutrition are worthy of note: the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2, November 2014) jointly organized by FAO and the World Health Organizations (WHO); and the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 in April 2016. They will be further analysed in subsequent sections reviewing FAO’s achievements.

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10 A technical note by UNSCN found that 8 SDGs (SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12 and 17) had a direct link with nutrition buttressed by robust evidence. See: Nutrition and the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals - A Technical Note, UNSCN October 2014. Other reviews have highlighted links to other SDGs as well.

3 Overview of the Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition

3.1. Origins of the Strategy

In 2011, the first-ever evaluation of FAO’s role and work in nutrition was carried out, setting a fundamental benchmark of the status of FAO’s work in nutrition. Its main conclusion was that FAO lacked the vision and corporate commitment accorded to nutrition in its original mandate. Nutrition had been distressingly absent in FAO’s thinking and priorities, resulting in a declining FAO leadership in nutrition. During that same time, the SUN Movement was initiated and the importance of nutrition was rising on the international and national agendas. The evaluation concluded that, unless FAO was able to take up the challenge of placing nutrition high on its own Agenda, and demonstrating how its contribution can make a difference to global malnutrition, the Organization was going to lose both in relevance and influence. Among the 14 recommendations of the 2011 evaluation was the articulation of a “vision and strategy for FAO’s contribution to nutrition-sensitive agricultural development reflecting FAO’s commitment to address both under-nutrition and overweight and obesity” (recommendation 2, Table 4 p. 63).

Since then, FAO Management has reinforced the Organization’s commitment to nutrition in the reviewed Strategic Framework, restructured the FAO technical unit in charge of Nutrition (ESN, formerly AGN), and committed to a more visible engagement of FAO in the global nutrition architecture. As a first step, the Organization embarked in a year-long participatory process to formulate a new vision and strategy for nutrition in FAO that would guide the implementation of the subsequent recommendations made by the evaluation team. The Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition was endorsed by the FAO Programme Committee at its 112th session in November 2012.

3.2. Elements of the Strategy

Developed alongside the reviewed Strategic Framework, the Nutrition Strategy has a five-year time frame (2012-2017). It quotes FAO’s vision of “a world free from hunger and malnutrition, where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner”, and adds: “In focusing this vision on nutrition, FAO seeks to help improve diets and raise levels of nutrition of the poorest and most nutritionally vulnerable in gender-sensitive and sustainable ways”. The focus is hence clearly on the poorest, with particular emphasis on the following groups: infants and young children, women of reproductive age including girls, preschoolers/school-aged/youths, and vulnerable households.

The Strategy describes a unique role for FAO in support of efforts by its Member Nations and their development partners to make food and agricultural systems deliver improved diets. It articulates comparative advantages such as being a knowledge leader, provider of

global public goods and capacities, trusted presence at country level, and potential convener of key nutrition stakeholders. It highlights as particularly significant FAO’s work to strengthen the capacity of countries to monitor and evaluate their nutrition situation, through capacity building, statistics, analyses, the development of new indicators, etc.

36 While the Strategy states that FAO will address malnutrition in all its forms (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency, overweight and obesity), it also says that undernutrition, including micronutrient deficiencies, should remain FAO’s primary focus.

37 The Strategy aligns with FAO’s constitutional mandate and organizational goals. It states to have been “formulated to directly contribute to the achievement of FAO’s Strategic Objective 1 on “Eradicate hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition”, although it is expected to “also contribute to achieving all its SOs”.

38 The Strategy was to be achieved through three main outcomes:

i. **Increased knowledge and evidence:** Knowledge products at global, regional and national level, such as databases on food and nutrition data (e.g. on food consumption, food composition, scientific advice on nutritional requirements, diet quality, etc.); specific analyses, tools and guidelines, as well as advocacy/communication to build political commitment. In particular, FAO was to partner with research organizations to try and strengthen the evidence base for food-based nutrition approaches, as it was felt that there was insufficient evidence for the impact of food and agricultural systems on nutrition, compared with the ample evidence documenting the efficacy of health-based nutrition interventions.

ii. **Improved food and agricultural systems’ governance for nutrition:** Bringing stakeholders together; empowering participatory processes that put nutrition on the policy agenda; participation in policymaking processes, platforms and initiatives; support to multi-sectoral and interagency initiatives, coordination forums and mechanisms for stakeholder accountability. FAO was to carry out this work with and through partnerships, among others with SUN, REACH and UNSCN.

iii. **Strengthened national, regional and local capacities:** Strengthen countries’ capacities through policy assistance, support for food security and nutrition (FSN) information systems and to national/regional data centres on food composition and other nutrition data, and professional training in nutrition education and curricula development. Nutrition Officers in regional offices were mentioned in the Strategy as key to assess capacity needs and tailor FAO’s activities to regional nutritional problems, in close collaboration with academic and training institutions.

39 Critically, the Nutrition Strategy pays limited attention to implementation issues. Unlike the World Food Programme’s (WFP’s) strategy, the FAO Nutrition Strategy lacks regional chapters that could delineate where the Organization needs to focus its nutrition work in Africa, Asia, etc. Moreover, it does not list anything close to the “minimum standards” of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality15 developed during the same period. Instead it lists five broad

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Evaluation of the Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition

criteria that FAO’s work in nutrition should meet\(^{16}\) and articulates four “principles for FAO’s engagement”, as follows:

i. Shape food and agricultural systems to be more nutrition-sensitive so to produce good nutritional outcomes. This implies the potential to take action across the entire system, from production to marketing, storage, processing and consumption. Increasing food diversity and dietary balance in consumption and raising consumer awareness are two ways to improve nutrition sensitivity.

ii. Have greater impact at country level by harnessing knowledge and experience across the Organization, and by aligning its work to build upon and serve country initiatives, policies, programmes and projects.

iii. Work in partnership, as well as across sectors among stakeholders.

iv. Promote economically, socially, environmentally sustainable and gender-sensitive policies, programmes and investments.

Furthermore, six considerations for successful implementation are put forward, summarized below:

- **Linking normative work and country action**: “FAO pays specific attention to how its normative responsibilities will be translated into operational activities and their impact at country level. FAO must be more responsive to regional and country needs […]. [This] will require sufficient high-level technical expertise at headquarters with regional and subregional staff in nutrition having more responsibilities for programme oversight”.

- **Ensuring regional and national impact**: Emphasis to be placed on demonstrating achievements and impact in nutrition through “a small number of focal countries […] for in-depth implementation of the Strategy”.

- **Building and reinforcing key partnerships**: At the country level, FAO’s work on nutrition to be implemented as part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and align its actions with those of other agencies with consideration of comparative strengths. At the global level, FAO to continue to play an active and supportive role in SUN, REACH and UNSCN. FAO will also strengthen its collaboration with UN agencies with a mandate in nutrition,\(^{17}\) non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs, in advocacy and building the evidence base, technical support and training), research institutions\(^{18}\) (to develop the knowledge base) and the private sector.

- **Monitoring and evaluation**: To be implemented as part of FAO’s overall Strategic Framework and its Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

\(^{16}\) 1) coherence with FAO’s Strategic Objectives; 2) feasibility; 3) focus on improving diets and nutritional outcomes through better food and agricultural systems; 4) relevance to specific nutrition priorities identified by countries and regions; 5) taking environmental, economic and social sustainability and gender equity into account.

\(^{17}\) With WFP, on food and nutrition security information systems, school-based nutrition programmes, purchase-for-progress and on Nutrition Strategy for areas and households at risk. With IFAD, on mainstreaming nutrition in agricultural investment plans and programmes. With WHO, on nutritional requirements, food safety and infant and young child feeding. With UNICEF on work on child nutrition. With United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), on maternal reproductive health.

\(^{18}\) Bioversity International and the CGIAR’s research programme on Agriculture for Improved Nutrition and Health.
- **Resource mobilization:** Nutrition at FAO needs strengthening, including additional financial support and human resources for both normative and country level work. Adjustments to the resource allocations for nutrition are likely to be required for FAO to have increased impact. A "cost analysis will be developed alongside the more detailed implementation plan" based on the Evaluation’s recommendation.

- **Implications for FAO’s ways of working:** "Work more effectively, through and with all technical divisions, to enhance impact at the global, regional and country levels, and to mainstream nutrition into its programme of work. Nutrition concerns, considerations and objectives will be incorporated into Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) and technical materials will be developed for FAO staff to assist governments in mainstreaming nutrition into agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Training FAO Representatives and their staff on links between food and nutrition will help them raise the priority of nutrition in country work."

41 A detailed implementation plan was not immediately developed. Such a plan would have detailed the specific activities, products and services needed to mainstream nutrition in FAO and set the Strategy within the context of FAO’s programming and planning cycle, particularly the Country Programming Framework (CPF) and the reviewed Strategic Framework.

42 In response to the mainstreaming mandate given to ESN in Objective 6 in 2016, a mainstreaming approach was developed by ESN in 2017 with inputs from all the Strategic Programme leaders, various divisions and field officers, revised and finally approved by the Assistant Director-General of the Economic and Social Development Department (ES) in 2018. The document outlines some institutional arrangements as well as the following seven ‘Pillars of Action’:

i. Nutrition concerns, considerations and objectives as well as SMART, nutrition-related indicators are integrated in the delivery mechanisms of FAO’s Strategic Framework and the project cycle.

ii. Information on nutrition is included in major FAO statistical and policy databases to support planning and monitoring on nutrition-sensitive food systems.

iii. Nutrition outcomes and issues are addressed in FAO’s flagship publications (i.e. State of Agricultural Commodity Markets, SOCO; State of Food and Agriculture, SOFA; State of Food Security and Nutrition, SOFI; State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture, SOFIA; and State of the World’s Forests, SOFO).

iv. Nutrition is addressed in relevant FAO technical committees (i.e. Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP); Committee on Agriculture, COAG; Committee on Fisheries, COFI; Committee on Forestry, COFO)

v. FAO actively uses corporate communication and knowledge management channels to disseminate knowledge as well as raise awareness on and commitment towards FAO’s work on nutrition and food systems.

vi. FAO staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to incorporate nutrition in their work as a result of a better access to relevant capacity development resources on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems.

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19 FAO’s corporate approach to nutrition mainstreaming - Pillars of action and institutional arrangements, Internal version, ESN, September 2018.
vii. FAO allocates human and financial resources to support nutrition.

3.3. Nutrition in the FAO Strategic Framework

Prior to 2012, nutrition was covered under 2 of the 11 Strategic Objectives defined along sectoral lines in the original Strategic Framework 2010-2019 (food quality and safety; food security and better nutrition). The reviewed Strategic Framework, endorsed in 2013, brought substantial changes to the way FAO operates. A new approach to programming and associated resources was introduced to promote interdisciplinarity, and five Strategic Programmes were designed in 2014 to provide the four-year results-based framework for delivering results against each SO.

The reviewed Strategic Framework did not initially take the Nutrition Strategy into account, and may even have attracted attention away from the newly minted Strategy. However, the subsequent refinements of the Strategic Framework20 between 2014 and 2017 have progressively integrated nutrition, thereby translating the intentions of the Nutrition Strategy in the result framework of the Organization. Nutrition was reflected in the reviewed Strategic Framework both as a part of SO1 on the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, and as of January 2016 as a cross-cutting theme described in organizational Outcome 6.5, to be mainstreamed in the work of all Strategic Objectives21 (Figure 1).

The Medium Term Plan 2014-17 identified six focus areas for nutrition work, three of which are directly linked to ICN2 implementation follow up:

i. support UN system policy and operational coordination on nutrition;

ii. support Member Countries through the SOs in implementing the ICN2 Rome Declaration on Nutrition and Framework for Action;

iii. monitor and report on implementation of the ICN2 Rome Declaration and Framework for Action;

iv. collaborate with the relevant SOs to strengthen corporate communication on nutrition and mobilization of resources for implementation of ICN2 Rome Declaration and Framework for Action;

v. promote the implementation of ‘actions’ and corporate approach for mainstreaming nutrition in the implementation of the reviewed Strategic Framework;

vi. contribute to the establishment and maintenance of a corporate food security and nutrition policy intelligence system to strengthen FAO’s support to evidence-based policy dialogue at global, regional and national levels.

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20 SF 2010-2019 (C 2009/3); Reviewed SF 2010-2019 (C 2013/7); updated SF and Outline MTP 2018-21 (CL 155/3).
21 See Outcome 6.5 of Objective 6 in the FAO Medium Term Plan 2018-21: Mainstreaming of nutrition in the Strategic Framework & Strengthening FAO’s contribution in the international nutrition architecture.
During 2016–2017, further refinements to the Strategic Framework were made in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Nutrition featured more prominently in the updated Strategic Framework and in FAO’s Medium Term Plan 2018–21. The emphasis changed to “all forms of malnutrition”, as reflected in the five SO-level SDG indicators as well as in the updated Outcome and Output statements. Explicit guidance was provided on how nutrition was to be mainstreamed in each of the ‘Strategic Programmes’, i.e. the FAO programmes backing the Strategic Objectives.

In practice, the extent to which nutrition was integrated in the five Strategic Programmes varies. An overview of such efforts is provided in section 4.3.c on mainstreaming.

At regional level, the Regional Initiatives serve as a mechanism to ensure effective delivery and impact of FAO’s work on the key priorities of each region contributing to the Strategic Objectives. Several Regional Initiatives incorporated a specific focus on nutrition such as the Zero Hunger Challenge in three regions principally (Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific). Nutrition features also more prominently in regional priorities identified at the 2016 Regional Conferences and to be addressed in the 2018–2021 biennium.

At country level, a number of Country Programming Frameworks have explicitly addressed nutrition outcomes and reported progress on nutrition-related indicators. However, as yet there is no corporate mechanism in place to consolidate the reporting of FAO nutrition-related work across all projects, country programmes and Strategic Programmes.

22 Extract from CLL155/3 - Reviewed Strategic Framework and Outline of the MTP2018-21 (pp. 39/40).

23 Two additional SO-level indicators: the prevalence of wasting and overweight in children under the age of five (SDG 2.2.2); and the mortality rate due to non-communicable diseases (SDG 3.4.1).
3.4. Organizational set-up for nutrition

The FAO organizational set-up for nutrition was restructured twice during the evaluation period, in 2013 and 2016. In 2013, the former Nutrition and Consumer Protection division (AGN) separated from the Codex and food safety group and moved to the Economic and Social Development Department (ES). In January 2016, following the decision to mainstream nutrition across the Organization (as laid out under Objective 6, Outcome 6.5 of the Strategic Framework), the Nutrition Division merged with the agribusiness specialists, food technologists and food value chains professionals from the ex-AGS division and became Nutrition and Food Systems Division (current ESN).

The division is currently organized into six groups covering specific areas of expertise, as follows: ESND (ICN2 follow-up, global advocacy), ESNA (food composition, nutrient requirements and scientific advice); ESNE (nutrition education); ESNP (nutrition policies and programmes); FLW (agro-food industries and food losses and waste) and MLVC (market linkages and value chains). Other programmatic areas include nutrition and resilience, as well as school meals. Furthermore, ESN collaborates with at least 14 other technical divisions engaged in nutrition work, in the following result domains: i) Nutrition and Food Systems Governance and Accountability; ii) Healthy Diets; iii) Nutrition-sensitive Social Protection; iv) Nutrition-sensitive Food and Agricultural Systems (Draft ESN programmatic focus areas for 2018-19).

In addition to headquarters staff, there are 12 nutrition professionals posted in regional and subregional offices. Many of these professionals cover food safety issues as well as nutrition, as they were established under AGN when the two functions were in the same technical unit.
4 Assessment of FAO’s contributions

4.1 Relevance to needs at global, regional and national levels

a) Relevance of the Strategy

Evaluation Question 1: Is the Nutrition Strategy comprehensive, and still relevant, given recent developments and emerging challenges in different regions (e.g. sufficient emphasis on micronutrient deficiency, nutrition transition and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), or urbanization)? Are the priorities the Strategy attempted to address still relevant/priority issues for Member States and to the 2030 global development Agenda? Is the focus on food systems useful, clear and sufficiently focussed? Are there useful new concepts or approaches that would deserve to be better reflected in the Strategy?

Finding 1: The Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition strengthened FAO’s commitment to this hitherto neglected part of its mandate, which is extremely relevant to the global challenges of malnutrition. So far these challenges have predominantly been approached through direct nutrition interventions mainly implemented in the health sector; yet improving diets through better food systems potentially offers more sustainable solutions to all forms of malnutrition.

This evaluation agrees with the central premise of the 2011 nutrition evaluation, that FAO will lose in relevance and influence if it fails to address rising nutrition concerns through its work on agriculture development and natural resources management. FAO’s work on “nutrition-sensitive” agriculture and food systems is extremely relevant to the global challenges of malnutrition. So far these challenges have predominantly been approached through direct nutrition interventions, mainly implemented through the health sector’s actors, but nutrition-sensitive food systems are key to a sustainable improvement in people’s diets since they determine what types and quantity of food is accessible in a given locale.

However, links between food systems and nutrition have been understudied as compared to the effect of health-based interventions. For instance, the 2008 Lancet Series of articles on Maternal and Child Nutrition estimated high rates of return on a number of “nutrition-specific” interventions, such as micronutrient supplementation, the promotion of breastfeeding and complementary feeding, or the treatment of severe acute malnutrition. Comparable cost-effectiveness data is generally not available – and probably undoable – for nutrition-sensitive approaches, projects, policies and programmes, such as those in the agriculture sector. As a result, programmes are often based on assumptions rather than on evidence. The Strategy’s Outcome 1 (increased knowledge and evidence to maximize the

24 The ten interventions recommended for scaling up by the Lancet Series on Maternal and Child Nutrition had a strong medical orientation: salt iodization, multiple micronutrient supplementation in pregnancy, calcium supplementation in pregnancy, energy-protein supplementation in pregnancy, vitamin A supplementation in childhood, etc.

25 In 2013, the Lancet Series on Maternal and Child Nutrition discussed the agricultural sector’s potential to contribute to improved nutrition, but stated a lack of evidence. A similar conclusion was reached by the FAO 2011 nutrition evaluation, and more recently by a 2014 UNSCN review of country-level programming in nutrition-sensitive agriculture. See: Country-Level Programming in Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture, by Janice Meerman, UNSCN 2014, available at https://www.unscn.org/files/Publications/Review-country-level-programming-nutrition-sensitive_agriculture-UNSCN.pdf
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**impact of food and agricultural systems on nutrition** is therefore highly relevant, and requires attention.

55 The other two outcomes (*improved food and agricultural systems’ governance for nutrition, and strengthened national, regional and local capacities*) are equally relevant to FAO’s mandate and the goals of its Member Nations. The latter is key, since nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems is a relatively new technical area, with less experience than accumulated in the health sector.

56 This being said, the mandate of FAO is quite broad, and its limited financial and human resources constrain the degree to which it can shoulder additional areas of work. From this perspective, the “strong focus on nutrition across the Organization” recommended by the 2011 nutrition evaluation called for a vigorous resource mobilization effort, or it would have come at the expense of other areas of work that Member States would probably consider just as important as nutrition.

**Finding 2:** In practice, a number of factors detracted from the Strategy’s relevance within FAO: the Strategy failed to address operational issues in sufficient depth, such as human resource requirements, resource mobilization instruments or priority setting; it lacked an accountability framework with agreed-upon results and indicators and reporting processes; and the reviewed Strategic Framework, introduced in 2013, soon took precedence over it. For instance, it became required of ESN to mainstream nutrition through the Strategic Programme teams rather than support country offices directly.

57 The 2012 Strategy was defined prior to the reviewed Strategic Framework, introduced in 2013, and nutrition was not fully reflected in the latter as a cross-sectoral issue until the 2016-2017 biennium, something which detracted from the Strategy’s relevance as a guiding document within FAO. For instance, it became required of ESN to mainstream nutrition through the Strategic Programme teams rather than support country offices directly. In fact some of the good work reported under section 4.3.c on mainstreaming nutrition was facilitated by the SP teams.

58 Moreover, the Nutrition Strategy’s last chapter, entitled “considerations for implementation”, is the least specific. It pays insufficient attention to costs (human and financial resource requirements), resource mobilization instruments, priority setting, responsibilities, and requirements in terms of data and evidence.

59 Critically, the Strategy itself failed to address operational issues in sufficient depth and lacked an accountability framework with agreed-upon indicators and reporting processes, which would have periodically reminded the Organization of the Strategy, as was the case with the “minimum standards” of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality that was developed during the same period. As a result, the Strategy came to be “crowded out”, superseded as a guiding tool by more recent documents such as the reviewed Strategic Framework, the Framework for Action emanating from the Second International Conference on Nutrition and its 60

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recommendations, or the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition and its six ‘pillars for nutrition action’.  

The drafters of the Strategy mentioned that a detailed implementation plan and a cost analysis were meant to be developed once the Strategy was approved. This process was delayed by the attention given to the Strategic Framework from 2013 onward.

**Finding 3:** The ICN2 Conference was a major achievement during the evaluated period. However, the 60 recommendations resulting from it may have detracted from the relevance of the Strategy as a guiding document for FAO’s work in nutrition, significantly broadening the scope of FAO’s attention to overweight and obesity, in addition to undernutrition, which was the primary focus of the Nutrition Strategy.

The organization of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (November 2014) jointly with WHO was a major achievement during the evaluated period, leading to and during which participating governments endorsed the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and its Framework for Action. This was followed by strong FAO support to the development of the 2030 Agenda and informing the tracking of targets for SDG2, which enshrines the objective of “ending all forms of malnutrition”. The proclamation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 in April 2016 built upon this achievement, with the aim to “achieve Global Nutrition and diet-related NCD targets by 2025 and contributing to the realization of the SDGs by 2030”.

However, the 60 recommendations resulting from ICN2 may have to a degree detracted from the relevance of the Strategy as a guiding document for FAO’s approach to nutrition. ICN2 resulted in broadening the scope of FAO’s attention to overweight and obesity, in addition to undernutrition, which was the primary focus of the Nutrition Strategy. This change in FAO’s focus was officially acted in the Medium Term Plan 2018-21, as described below, but it was influenced by ICN2.

This being said, there is obviously some resonance between the 60 recommendations from ICN2 and the Nutrition Strategy of FAO. Likewise, the five priority areas for FAO’s contributions to the Nutrition Decade are closely aligned with the Nutrition Strategy’s outcomes, and one can therefore see the Decade as somewhat of a prolongation of the Nutrition Strategy (at least as far as the FAO work programme in support of the Decade is concerned).

**Finding 4:** The Strategy is now at a variance with the current Medium Term Plan in stating that “undernutrition, including micronutrient deficiencies, should remain FAO’s primary focus, as WHO continues to emphasize its work on the public health implications of non-communicable diseases relating to overweight and obesity.”

**Finding 5:** Among the things that have changed since the Strategy was adopted, the potential contribution of food systems to nutrition is now centre-stage. It was not fully articulated in the Strategy that did not provide specific examples of which food systems changes could be desirable from a nutritional perspective. This incomplete articulation of food systems as drivers of nutrition by FAO remains an issue today, and represents a holding block to operationalize the Organization’s

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27) sustainable food systems for healthy diets; 2) aligned health systems providing universal coverage of essential nutrition actions; 3) social protection and nutrition education; 4) trade and investment for improved nutrition; 5) enabling food and breastfeeding environments; 6) review, strengthen and promote nutrition governance and accountability.

28) FAO is custodian agency for relevant indicators in SDGs 2, 5 and 12.
efforts to focus on nutrition. It is partially offset by analytical work recently conducted in partnership with the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition and by the High Level Panel of Experts of the Committee on Food Security.

Overweight, obesity and NCDs are increasing in countries at all income levels and the situation in lower-income countries can quickly become overwhelming due to the lack of resources to address the health consequences. In keeping the focus of FAO’s nutrition work on undernutrition, the Strategy did not pay heed to the recommendation of the 2011 nutrition evaluation that the Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition should address both undernutrition and overweight and obesity. Since then, the Medium Term Plan 2018-21 officially broadened the scope of FAO’s work in nutrition to cover “all forms of malnutrition”, including overweight and obesity. This has clearly strengthened the relevance of FAO’s nutrition work in high-income and upper middle-income countries, but it also means that the Nutrition Strategy is now partly obsolete.

One of the four guiding principles of the Strategy was to “shape food and agricultural systems to be more nutrition-sensitive so to produce good nutritional outcomes”, and the second intended outcome is improved food and agricultural systems’ governance for nutrition. This being said, the Strategy was drafted at a time when FAO’s main focus was rather on food security.

Since then, FAO has published a large number of knowledge products (see section 4.1.a, Outcome 1) exploring this issue, but has yet to fully communicate the variety of “pathways” linking food systems to nutrition. Some progress has been made on this issue: the SOFA report for 2013 set the scene, describing in general terms the challenges ahead, followed by the CFS High Level Panel of Experts report #12 on food systems and nutrition and now the CFS own work on the development of voluntary guidelines on food systems and nutrition. GLOPAN fleshed out the contribution of food systems to nutrition in a seminal report entitled “Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21st century”, to which FAO contributed.

b) Relevance of the ESN areas of work

Evaluation Question 2: What priority issues are addressed through FAO’s work at global, regional and country levels? Was the work carried out by FAO on nutrition since 2012 aligned with the Strategy? Was it supportive of countries/regions priority needs? What entry points appear the most promising? Are there thematic or sectorial gaps?

Finding 6: Recent FAO knowledge products are highly relevant in the context of emerging nutrition challenges, giving attention to all forms of nutrition (not only to undernourishment but also to overweight and obesity). There are some gaps that still need to be filled such as knowledge products better tailored for field level staff and non-specialists, modules on monitoring and evaluation of nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and guidance on how to mainstream nutrition in sectors other than crop production (livestock, fisheries, forestry and value chains).

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29 The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition is a body which promotes the role of agriculture and food systems in preventing malnutrition.

FAO produces a broad range of knowledge products, which largely respond to its mandate and are relevant to fulfil its role as knowledge broker in nutrition and its link to agriculture and food systems. The evaluation reviewed a sample of 37 FAO knowledge products pertaining to nutrition, drawn from 168 nutrition-related KPs listed by ESN and developed between 2011 and 2018. The sampled KPs covered a wide range of topics and comprised a variety of formats (fact sheets, policy brief, books, guidelines, comic strips, videos and e-learning courses).

This review of nutrition-related knowledge products did not include the State of the World Food Insecurity series, coordinated by the Economic and Social Development Department (ESD) and already reviewed in the SO1 evaluation. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that SOFI now has a strong nutrition orientation. Produced collaboratively by all the UN agencies relevant to the issue (FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), WFP and WHO), it reports on a broad array of nutrition indicators (stunting, wasting, overweight, exclusive breastfeeding, anaemia in women and adult obesity) and has in effect positioned itself to become a global UN report on SDG2. Regional overviews of food and nutrition insecurity (often called “regional SOFIs”) have also been published.

The reviewed nutrition knowledge products were found very relevant to fulfil the organizations’ mandate and to achieve the outcomes envisaged in FAO’s Nutrition Strategy. They meet the knowledge gap for scientific nutrition knowledge on areas such as dietary guidelines, food composition, healthy diets as well as for scientific evidence to support policymaking (Outcome 1); support nutrition governance (Outcome 2) by providing practical guidance on how to incorporate the nutrition dimension into agriculture and food systems; and are meant to build capacities on nutrition and food security of governmental staff and staff of other stakeholders at regional, national and local levels (Outcome 3).

The most recent products contribute significantly to the recently emerging challenges to improve nutrition. Many products address issues such as nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems, food environments, resilience, biodiversity and healthy diets. In addition, most recent knowledge products address malnutrition in all of its forms, giving attention not only to undernourishment but also to overweight and obesity.

The results from an external survey conducted as part of this evaluation indicate that FAO’s normative products such as the food composition tables, the food-based dietary guidelines, the NSA guidelines and e-learning courses are perceived as relevant and useful. The survey was answered by 153 respondents, mostly nutritionists or experts working in closely related fields from various organizations and institutions with whom FAO has partnered in recent years including 20 from governmental institutions (often Ministries of Health). The responses are reflected in the findings below.

Specific normative products reviewed include the following:

- **Food composition tables:** They are an essential tool to translate information about crops and species absorbed in the diet into information about nutrient intake. While the composition of most widely used food items is already known, the focus over the past decade has been on analysing the potential contribution in addressing nutrient deficiencies of additional food items – in particular local food specialties as well as indigenous foods, wild foods, forest products and so far underutilized food items – and furthermore incorporating and analysing additional nutrients. This work, promoted

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31 Especially those developed from 2015 to date.
through the INFOODS Regional Data Centres (see below), links nutrition with biodiversity in the context of the recent adoption (January 2015) of the Voluntary Guidelines for Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Policies, Programmes and National and Regional Plans of Action on Nutrition by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The guidelines stress that including the wide range of varieties, cultivars and breeds of plants and animals, as well as wild, neglected and underutilized species in agriculture programmes is key to addressing malnutrition in all its forms. The orientation is relevant in pushing against policies and programmes focused on a too narrow range of crops and food. It should be noted however that the scope of this work is almost infinite given the vast number of local preparations and delicacies in this world. The resources required to collect, check and publish food composition data for more and more food items and nutrients already exceed FAO’s means. This calls for increased partnerships with national and regional actors, e.g. universities, building upon the International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS) collaboration, whereas FAO’s role could be in coordination, facilitation and building of regional and country level capacities.

- **Collaborative databases:** One way to tackle such complexity is through “crowd-sourcing”, i.e. collaborative databases on food and dietary data such as INFOODS) on food composition data and the FAO/WHO Global Individual Food consumption data Tool (GIFT) collaborative platform of individual quantitative dietary data from surveys conducted around the world. These remain among FAO’s most relevant normative products in nutrition. INFOODS is a well-established area of work, whereas the FAO/WHO GIFT platform is a new project involving researchers around the globe and aiming to strengthen the availability of data about the actual diets of people in as many locales as possible. Such data is scarce, not assessed in a harmonized and standardized manner, and with the increased attention to improved diets and food-based approaches, in high demand. GIFT supports partner countries to standardize and harmonize, present, analyse and make individual food consumption data available. Five countries were represented in the data sets available on the platform by July 2018.

- **Food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG):** FAO’s support to the development of national food-based dietary guidelines and communication materials is important to promote healthy and sustainable diets. In this regard, the ICN2 in 2014 proposed to empower consumers through improved and evidence-based health and nutrition information and education for healthy dietary practices. The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition and its work programme 2016 to 2025 proposed national food-based dietary guidelines as an important action area (Action Area 6). Even countries with their dietary guidelines already formulated and endorsed still require technical assistance to translate them into

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33 It should be stressed that FAO’s food composition work is more than just a database, and also include related methodologies and capacity development tools (guidelines, training material, e-learning courses, etc.).

34 GIFT is an FAO/WHO collaborative platform to store and make available quantitative individual food consumption data from surveys conducted around the world.

35 INFOODS was established in 1984, it is composed of a global network of food composition experts aiming to improve the quality, availability, reliability and use of food composition data. INFOODS is organized into several regional data centers with a global coordinator in ESN.
practice, e.g. through education and communication approaches, but also for their integration into national policies.

- **Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W):** Assessing the levels of hunger and malnutrition is essential for developing and monitoring policies aimed at addressing this issue. The Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women was developed, tested and promoted by ESN and partners to assess the quality of diets and food intake by women. Since women are often a nutritionally vulnerable group, MDD-W is arguably a good proxy to measure micronutrient adequacy (a critical dimension of diet quality) and track the quality of a family’s diet as well. Donors and partners have indicated high interest and the need to support its further development, validating and improving, and application through large scale and national surveys, including Demographic and Health Surveys or Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys.

- **Education for Effective Nutrition in Action (English: ENACT; French: ENAF):** FAO’s nutrition team developed the ENACT and ENAF training curricula to provide professional training courses, tutorials, session plans and reference materials for teachers and student of academic and professional training institutions. The material was developed, tested and piloted in close collaboration with African universities in six anglophone and six francophone African countries. The courses were found to be of high-quality, very comprehensive and thorough, geared at conveying the basic tenets of nutrition. Their relevance stems from the lack of nutritional courses at university level in many developing countries.

- **Nutrition-sensitive agriculture (NSA) guidelines:** Partners are looking at FAO for recommendations on how to improve nutrition through agriculture and food systems. The appreciation offered in the partner survey for the toolkit on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems, including the Compendium of Indicators, is part of this demand. Among NSA products, the evaluation found some excellent policy briefs, short practical guides produced around key messages and adequate to meet the needs of policymakers and practitioners for concise documents, such as “Key recommendations for improving nutrition through agriculture and food systems” and “Designing nutrition-sensitive agriculture investments. Checklist and guidance for programme formulation”. Guidelines on nutrition-sensitive programme design were found also clear and potentially useful.

There are some gaps that still need to be filled for nutrition mainstreaming, such as knowledge products better tailored for field level staff, modules on monitoring and evaluation of nutrition-sensitive agriculture as mentioned above, and in sectors other than crop production such as livestock, fisheries, forestry and value chains. There were certain cases where the school feeding programme promoted the use of eggs, but the reviewed knowledge products made only rare reference to animal products as a way to promote nutritional outcomes (particularly in curtailing micronutrient deficiencies). Likewise, fish are still considered to be more of an income source than as a source of nutrition in FAO technical units and in national ministries, who tend to consider food safety issues linked to international trade as more important than nutritional information. As for non-wood forest products, including wild fruits, mushrooms, honey, bushmeat and insects, they are traded and eaten widely as proven by several market surveys, with scant food safety regulations.
Finding 7: Within ESN, a significant uplift on the policy side, as well as successive “de-emphasis” put on some normative work in the Programmes of Work and Budget for 2016-17 and 2018-19, have resulted in reduced capacities to work on traditional normative products.

Over the recent years, FAO has invested in the rising needs around policy dialogue, strategy and policies support. This uplift on the policy side, as well as successive “de-emphasis” put on some core normative work in two successive Programmes of Work and Budget (2016-17 and 2018-19) and the transfer of one key position on food composition, resulted in reduced resources and capacities to work on areas of FAO’s traditional and technical core mandates. Frequently mentioned work not receiving the required attention and resources are the Food Composition Table, Codex and related mandate-setting, and the progresses towards standardization of indicators and measurements, in particular the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women indicator. The rationale behind those two de-emphasis events is unclear to the evaluation team, given that food composition work was afforded high priority by the 2011 evaluation of FAO’s role and work in nutrition.

The Nutrition Country Profiles represent a type of knowledge product which was quite relevant, but AGN had to discontinue their regular update in 2010 due to the heavy workload involved. The Profiles were useful in that in addition to nutritional indicators, they provided excellent qualitative information, explaining the geographic distribution of malnutrition and its evolution over time in any given country, and they could thus easily feed into programme design and policy support. In 2017, the FAO Investment Centre Division (TCI) assessed the extent to which the World Bank portfolio of projects was nutrition-sensitive, based on a sample of 55 project appraisal documents approved from 2012 to 2015. A striking conclusion was that “the basic diagnosis on who is malnourished and why as a basis for project design is still missing in the majority of projects.”

This echoes a conclusion of the recently completed SO1 evaluation, that abundant data has now been collected on malnutrition in every country but “there is still a need to ‘make sense’ of the data collected in order to assess policy and implementation gaps.”

36 The Medium Term Plan 2014-17 and Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17 (C 2015/3) reduced “work on nutrition education curricular development and some food composition work” (para. 75), and the Medium Term Plan 2018-21 and Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19 (C 2017/3) reduced the work on “nutrition education curriculum development and some food composition work, development of Minimum Dietary Diversity indicator, nutrient productivity concept development, and preparation of technical guidance in support of agroindustry development” (para. 61).

37 Recommendation 7 stated that FAO should maintain a focus on this normative work, while also demonstrating “its value added to assessments, statistics and policy assistance” and shifting “from ad-hoc country support to work strategically to build capacity at the regional and sub-regional levels, encourage regional collaboration to support countries to collect and analyze food composition data that is demanded by end-users.” Progress has been made on the latter front.

38 They are still available on the FAO website at http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/nutrition/profiles_by_country_en.stm, a site built by AGN and dated 2010.

39 The WHO Nutrition Landscape Information System (NLIS) provides a similar resource but focuses on information relevant for health-based interventions.


Finding 8: Since the promulgation of the Strategy, the FAO field programme related to nutrition has evolved towards a more deliberate effort to address malnutrition, to mainstream nutrition in agriculture development plans, to promote stakeholder coordination, to support dietary diversification, or to target women, girls, infants and young children.

As explained in section 4.3.a on resources, the amount of resources mobilized by FAO for nutrition-relevant projects has more than doubled since the adoption of the Nutrition Strategy. While it would be beyond the scope of this evaluation to review with a nutrition lens the relevance of the entire FAO country programme, an analysis of nutrition-related projects shows that the portfolio has been evolving qualitatively since the adoption of the Strategy. There are now more projects directly and deliberately addressing malnutrition, including stunting, wasting and anaemia, aiming for dietary diversification engaging multiple sectors, and/or devoted to coordination and governance structures in food security and nutrition, in line with the Nutrition Strategy. While FAO projects at community level typically target farmers, smallholders and cooperative members, one can now also find some nutrition-sensitive projects targeting women, girls, infants and young children or the youth. This is for instance often the case for joint UN programmes implemented in cooperation with other UN agencies such as UNICEF, which are a relatively new development.42

Among the innovative initiatives identified at regional and country level, one should mention the support provided by FAO to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programmes (CAADP) process in a large number of Africa countries, through the drafting of a second generation of National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs) with a dedicated effort to mainstream nutrition concerns in NAIPs. This very relevant work is described in more details in the section 4.2 on effectiveness.

In terms of investment, the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) has supported commercial aquaculture, poultry farming and nutritional awareness in Africa as a way to promote nutritional benefits, especially for children. In Bangladesh, the "Meeting the Undernutrition Challenge" (MUCH) programme financially supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Union, builds on prior FAO support to the country and provides policy, planning and statistical assistance to the Government. It is also an outstanding example for a has successful promotion supported the development of a country’s multi-sectoral approach to nutrition. In Cambodia and Malawi, the ESN Nutrition Education and Consumer Awareness Group led an interesting research project that reviewed the impact achieved by two FAO projects with a nutrition education component.

In Central Africa, a regional project implemented with the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) catalogued edible non-wood forest products in Central Africa and promoted dietary diversification and consumption of micronutrient rich forest foods. In Bolivia, an excellent example of an agriculture- and food-based intervention is the “Integrated Agrifood System for Quinoa and Camelids – Promotion of Sustainable Family Community Farming in the Bolivian Altiplano”. Activities included certification of seed producers and establishment of municipal seed banks; training on organic certification, improved post-harvest handling

42 The reviewed nutrition-sensitive portfolio included 29 such UN joint projects, 12 of them formulated prior to Nutrition Strategy, and 17 formulated after it.

43 GCP/INT/108/GER - Improving the dietary intakes and nutritional status of infants and young children through improved food security and complementary feeding counselling (IMCF).
and storage of quinoa, wool and meat; marketing; and school feeding via contracts with the municipality.

81 In the Near-East and North Africa region, nutrition-sensitive projects include policy work (Mauritania, Palestine); food fortification (e.g. in Sudan); food losses and waste reduction and value chain development (Egypt and Tunisia); awareness raising on nutrition-sensitive agriculture (Syria); and nutrition education (Egypt). In Europe and Central Asia, FAO has supported school food and nutrition programmes in Albania, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as nutrition education for Syrian refugees in Turkey. The data collection capacities of countries from the region were also strengthened through collaboration with the Capacity Development Network in Nutrition in Central and Eastern Europe (CAPNUTRA) and the Food Research Institute (FRI) of the National Agricultural and Food Centre of Slovakia.

82 This cursory review of the field programme indicates high levels of relevance. There is little doubt about the relevance of school meals programmes for instance, given that an estimated 368 million children, about one out of every five children worldwide, receive a meal at school every day.44

4.2 Effectiveness – is FAO’s work in nutrition achieving results?

a) Overview of results achieved

Evaluation Question 3: What have been the major achievements and significant/influential areas of work under each of the Strategy’s outcomes? Is the work evolving in its extension and size? Is it evolving in its content towards better quality of design and better implementation? What were the success factors? What were the weaknesses? What was the balance of investments or efforts between global, regional and country level? Were there synergies between the different work streams and levels?

Outcome 1: Generating knowledge and evidence for food-based approaches

Finding 9: A large increase in FAO’s nutrition-related publications is noted over the evaluated period, as well as an effort to translate more publications into various languages and to develop more integrated packages of publications targeted at different audiences.

83 To assess effectiveness under Outcome 1, devoted to knowledge and evidence building, the evaluation analysed a list of 168 nutrition-related FAO knowledge products45 provided by ESN and developed between 2011 and 2018, and reviewed in some depth a sample of 37 of them.46 Each sampled product was rated against a set of criteria using a five point scale.47

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44 Global School Feeding Sourcebook - Lessons from 14 countries, by Drake et al., USA Imperial College Press, 2016.

45 To be fair, knowledge products also meet other objectives of the Strategy, e.g. building capacity, but the results from this analysis are presented here in their entirety for ease of reading.

46 This review of nutrition-related knowledge products did not include the State of the World Food Insecurity series (SOFI), coordinated by the Economic and Social Development Department (ESD) and already reviewed in the SO1 evaluation.

47 Criteria: clarity of purpose; clarity of audience, clarity of content and practical guidance, visual layout and design, resources and annexes, potential usefulness as a knowledge product; rating scale: 1=very weak, 2=inadequate, 3=partly adequate, 4=good, adequate, 5=very good, excellent.
The results are presented in summary form in Figure 2. The complete list of sampled knowledge products is presented in Appendix 4.

**Figure 2**: Ratings of FAO knowledge products on nutrition (evaluation team’s rating of 37 sampled products)

Out of 168 knowledge products listed by ESN, 108 were developed between 2015 and 2018, demonstrating a significant increase in FAO’s nutrition-related publications over the evaluated period. However, this may in part reflect the fact that some older material may not be referenced by ESN anymore.

Evidently, these sort of quality assessments are inherently subjective. Yet, the analysis suggests that ESN has managed to maintain a good quality level as it was increasing the number of knowledge products published.

The reviewed knowledge products encompassed a variety of formats, such as technical guidelines, e-learning modules, etc. Amongst the e-learning modules, the one on Basic Concepts of Nutrition, Food Security and Livelihoods was found an excellent ‘primer’, while the module on Improving Nutrition through Agriculture and Food Systems provides a rich set of examples of how to integrate nutrition into food system policies, investments and programmes in a diversity of contexts (rural and urban, different regions in the world).

The reviewed technical guidelines covered two broad topics: i) the design of nutrition-sensitive agriculture investments; and ii) the measurement of specific food security and nutrition indicators such as food diversity scores. The guidelines on nutrition-sensitive agriculture are frequently quoted by partners as being particularly useful. The guidelines on measuring FSN indicators were found very clear, meeting the needs of field practitioners. Guidance on measuring indicators is available from many other sources, yet the value added of FAO’s guidelines lie in its potential to standardize data collection and analysis and thus allow comparability across surveys and countries.
A commendable aspect is the development of integrated packages of a variety of knowledge products focusing on one single strategic theme. A particularly good example is provided by the FAO toolkit on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems that encompasses informative flyers to disseminate the different products, brief policy and programme guidelines geared towards decision makers and development practitioners, and a set of e-learning modules. This series of KPs provides advice and practical guidance to help craft legal, policy and programmatic actions to make agriculture and food systems more nutrition-sensitive, and focuses on ten recommendations to strengthen the nutrition impact of agriculture programmes and investments and five recommendations to create nutrition-sensitive food environments. Another good example is the series of publications for the Year of Pulses. Repeating a core message through a range of publications targeted at different audiences is considered an effective way to meet the knowledge needs of a variety of audiences, build a shared understanding and help translate knowledge into practice.

In terms of dissemination and use of these knowledge products, the FAO website does not collect and publish systematic download statistics. A one-time analysis conducted in June 2017 showed that four key publications on food systems and nutrition were being accessed on the FAO website at a frequency of approximately 250 downloads each per month in 2016, a reasonable performance.

Respondents to the external survey praised FAO’s knowledge products as valuable to promote healthy diets and the integration of nutrition into agriculture. In this regard, food-based dietary guidelines, food composition tables and the materials and tools around the subject of nutrition-sensitive agriculture appeared as the most recognized and commented material, even considered as ‘state-of-the-art’.

FAO also helped lay the foundation for global, national and regional initiatives, e.g. the Agriculture-Nutrition Community of Practice (Ag2Nut) and the Agriculture, Nutrition & Health (ANH) Academy, a global research network in agriculture and food systems for improved nutrition and health, or the International Dietary Data Expansion (INDDEX) website to facilitate acquisition and use of food and nutrient consumption data.

Finding 10: Many of the reviewed knowledge products were technical in nature and style, with a lack of material targeted at non-specialized personnel, such as policymakers, mid-level professionals, private sector operators and community-level workers. Even knowledge products explicitly targeted at the youth or a general public often used overly technical language.

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48 1) incorporate nutrition objectives and indicators; 2) assess the local context; 3) target the vulnerable and improve equity; 4) collaborate with other sectors; 5) maintain the natural resources base; 6) empower women; 7) facilitate production diversification and production of nutrient dense crops; 8) improve processing, storage and preservation; 9) expand markets and market access; and 10) incorporate nutrition education.

49 1) increase incentives (and decrease disincentives) for availability, access and consumption of diverse, nutritious and safe foods; 2) monitor dietary consumption and access to safe, diverse and nutritious foods; 3) include measures that protect and empower the poor and women; 4) develop capacity; and 5) support multi-sectoral strategies to improve nutrition.

50 Key recommendations for improving nutrition through agriculture and food systems; Designing nutrition-sensitive agriculture investments - Checklist and guidance for programme formulation; Compendium of indicators for nutrition-sensitive agriculture; and Nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems in practice - Options for intervention.

51 In comparison, an average Office of Evaluation (OED) evaluation report is downloaded about once a day, i.e. 30 times a month.
This and past evaluations point to a limited level of use beyond the realm of professional nutritionists. Most of the respondents to the external survey were nutritionists, and they used the FAO knowledge products primarily in technical decision-making (e.g. to write project proposals, to teach and occasionally to help a private sector entity formulate or market its products) rather than, say, in allocating funding or defining policy. This may be because most of the reviewed knowledge products were of a technical nature, presented as books or compendiums, and presenting very rich scientific evidence and lessons learned about the different themes relevant to this evaluation, in a style and language best suited to high level professionals with a strong FSN background. The review found a dearth of material targeted at non-specialized personnel, such as policymakers, mid-level professionals and community-level workers. Three flyers published in 2016 on the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition and targeted at Member Countries’ ministries and delegates provided basic information on the Decade, but lacked specifics on how countries could get involved.

A reviewed product that responded to the needs of practitioners at community level was the Guide to conducting participatory cooking sessions to improve complementary feeding practices, which provides clear messages and practical guidance on how to conduct participatory cooking demonstrations of dishes using locally available and affordable ingredients.

FAO has tried to address children in a series of comic strips entitled FAO Kids. The review sampled three of these: one (The School Project, 2016) looked very clear and simple, while the other two published during the Year of the Pulses (Pulses Contribute to Food Security, and Nutrition Benefits of Pulses) deliver too many messages at the same time, some of them written in a rather technical language. Involving teachers, psychologists, other professionals and children themselves in the design of this type of material would be of great benefit to test their suitability.

46 of the 167 knowledge products listed by ESN, or 27.5 percent of them, were produced at the decentralized level, which in theory would allow for greater tailoring to different contexts, knowledge learning from practical experience, and knowledge exchange among regions and countries. However, such cross-regional lessons learning is yet to be fully realized, with language being a barrier. There is a noticeable effort to translate more knowledge products into various languages, but FAO’s knowledge products emanating from regional and country offices get less visibility than they deserve outside of their region or country of origin.

FAO has also published regional overviews of food and nutrition insecurity (often called “regional SOFIs”), starting with Latin America and the Caribbean in 2015 and now in all regions. Such region-specific ‘panoramas’ (as the LAC version is called) allow for a deeper analysis of regional and subregional trends and help FAO anchor its regional advocacy firmly into strong analytical work on regional issues rather than simply translate global discourse into a regional version.

52 The survey was distributed through various technical networks used by ESN. Many responses appeared to come from the INFOODS network.
Finding 11: Modest progress has been achieved in evidence building at country level, e.g. through the progressive integration of nutrition concerns in the suite of Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) tools. The Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women indicator has been gaining recognition but has only been piloted on a large scale in few countries so far.

The MDD-W indicator – a food-based indicator for assessing diet diversity – was developed over the years by ESN in collaboration with partners and research institutions and with significant donor support. It has so far been piloted by National Statistical Offices in a handful of countries (Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland and Tajikistan). Through FAO support, the MDD-W now forms part of the CAADP Zero Hunger indicators. FAO also supported the inclusion of the Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU) indicator in the CAADP results framework and the African Development Bank Nutrition Scorecard.

Though being considered initially, the MDD-W did not become an indicator to measure and track SDG targets. In contrast, another food security indicator developed by FAO over the same time frame – the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) which tries to measure people’s experience in terms of access to food – was adopted as an official indicator to monitor SDG2 and has been included in national surveys in a growing number of countries. The methodology for the MDD-W indicator was not yet validated at the time the SDG indicators were formulated. In addition, the MDD-W survey module is complex compared to the FIES, asking respondents to list and describe all items they ate or drank during the day as categorized in ten food types. If a respondent mentions a mixed dish like a soup or stew, the surveyor needs to prompt for all the ingredients in the mixed dish. This procedure requires more skills than administering the fixed set of eight questions in the FIES module. Nevertheless, the MDD-W remains an important indicator, as it reflects an individual’s food consumption rather than a general perception of hunger and food insecurity. Additional capacity building efforts are required, including from the international partners who have supported and piloted the use of the indicator (European Union, GIZ, United States Department of Agriculture-Department of Homeland Security (USDA-DHS), SUN Movement). However, FAO has recently de-emphasised the development of the MDD-W indicator in the FAO Medium Term Plan 2018-21.

Beyond knowledge products and indicators, FAO’s contribution to evidence building also involves support to national food security information systems, particularly in countries with significant food aid assistance such as Somalia (the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit, FSNAU) or South Sudan (Agriculture and Food Information Systems for Decision Support in South Sudan, AFIS). FSNAU is the oldest one, and lays at the origin of most of the work of FAO on the Integrated Phase Classification, including the recent development of a malnutrition scale to complement the acute food insecurity scale. It was developed from 2014 to 2017 by an ad hoc IPC Nutrition Working Group with members from the CDC, USDA and GIZ.

FAO and other partners have used the MDD-W in many more countries in analytical work and as part of project monitoring systems.

The IPC is a set of tools to classify food security situations based on existing information, analysed in a multi-stakeholder, consensus-based process to buttress objectivity and reduce biases in food security analyses. The main outputs are usually a map with color-coded classes of food insecurity levels, and an estimate of the number of food-insecure people in different locations of a country. The process, backstopped by a Global Support Unit hosted in FAO, is currently implemented in 35 to 40 countries, many of them in Africa. Three IPC ‘scales’ have been developed. The oldest and most widely used is the acute food insecurity scale, which is quite influential among humanitarians. The chronic scale was introduced in 2012-2013 to highlight situations of structural food insecurity. Finally, the malnutrition scale is a recent development of the acute scale, taking into consideration various malnutrition factors beyond food insecurity, such as poor caring practices.
FSNAU, Institute of Child Health/University of London, WHO, UNSCN, UNICEF, FANTA and the World Bank. The IPC Acute Malnutrition Classification tool has so far been applied in Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Sudan and Sudan in combination with the acute scale. There are still very few examples of its use for decision-making.

In South Sudan, the AFIS programme supported the institutionalization of robust food security information systems at both national and state levels. Although a nutrition component was missing in its original design, AFIS in South Sudan has added one very early on. A final evaluation of this project concluded that by integrating nutrition considerations and data, AFIS has helped connect nutrition and food security actors. More efforts are required to strengthen this connection and AFIS is expected to play a major role to support coordination within the framework of the SUN, in partnership with the national Food Security Council and through strengthened links with the Food Security, Livelihoods and Nutrition cluster.

Outcome 2: Improved food and agricultural systems’ governance for nutrition

Finding 12: At the global level, FAO demonstrated strong leadership in co-convening ICN2, promoting the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025, as well as supporting the development of the 2030 Agenda and informing the tracking of SDG2 targets. FAO was also successful in hosting UNSCN at FAO headquarters, providing mutual benefits and access to a wide range of food system experts.

The Second International Conference on Nutrition convened in Rome from 19 to 21 November 2014 by FAO and WHO was by all account a resounding success. The resulting Rome Declaration on Nutrition and Framework for Action significantly raised food-based approaches to nutrition in the eyes of the world’s political, strategic and programme leaders. Moreover, ICN2 had a significant effect on the degree to which nations prioritize nutrition in their policy and programmatic choices. The Global Nutrition Report was launched during the conference.

The Conference also established FAO’s standing in the global playing field for nutrition. Following ICN2, external stakeholders have increasingly recognized FAO’s contribution to tracing the linkages between food systems and nutritional outcomes. FAO has further promoted the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025, as well as supported the development of the 2030 Agenda and informing the tracking of SDG2 targets. Thanks to the Decade, nutrition is for the first time a standing item for discussion every two years at the United Nations General Assembly. FAO and WHO were mandated to lead with the implementation of the Decade and to develop a work programme for the Nutrition Decade in collaboration with other UN agencies.

Finally, ESN officers have supported the growing work of the CFS on nutrition. FAO was also successful in hosting and re-launching the UNSCN at FAO headquarters, providing mutual benefits and access to a wide range of food system experts. UNSCN was created in 1977 through a UN Economic and Social Council resolution. Once lauded as one of the “UN’s

58 The WHO Global Nutrition Policy Review 2016-2017 reported that one-third of surveyed countries and almost half of African countries developed a nutrition policy after ICN2.
important innovations”, it survived many reforms. The latest one at the beginning of the evaluated period stirred UNSCN towards a stronger UN orientation, and led to the UNSCN Secretariat moving back from WHO in Geneva to FAO in Rome in 2016. In recent times, UNSCN has produced notable work such as the “Guidance Note on Integration of Nutrition in the UN Development Framework”, the Guidance note for UN Humanitarian Coordinators: Integrated Multi-sectoral Nutrition Actions in Humanitarian Situations” and “Sustainable Diets for Healthy People and a Healthy Planet” and several others. It convenes four communities of practice: the Agriculture-Nutrition Community; Accelerated Reduction Effort on Anaemia (AREA); Nutrition and Non-communicable Chronic Diseases; and Nutrition and Climate Change.

This sequence of achievements at global level was followed by an international Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition (1-2 December 2016) and subsequent five similar symposiums at regional level held during 2017, to promote food-based approaches to address malnutrition and advocate for a stronger integration of nutrition in agriculture. The symposiums both at global and regional levels brought together the resources of different levels of the Organization, with excellent collaboration between ESN, regional offices and the Office for Corporate Communication (OCC), to help operationalize the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition using systemic approaches centred on food systems for better nutrition and generally disseminate FAO’s food systems and nutrition approaches.

The FIRST Facility (centred on governance and policy support) offers welcomed additional capacity to some country offices. A training week organized for FIRST policy officers in February 2017 included a full day on nutrition facilitated jointly by ESN and the European Union-Nutrition Advisory services, and 12 out of the 34 FIRST officers work on nutrition in one way or another. In Mozambique for instance, FIRST is about to support the Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN) to strengthen implementation at provincial and district levels of the Multi-Sector Action Plan to Reduce Chronic Malnutrition (PAMRDC), a framework of actions aimed at reducing the current chronic undernutrition rate from 44 percent in 2008 to 20 percent in 2020.

**Finding 13:** Significant work on governance has taken place in Latin America on school meal programmes, food systems and obesity prevention, in Asia through the promotion of crop and diet diversity, and in Africa where FAO has helped to strengthen countries’ capacity for mainstreaming nutrition in their national agriculture and food security investment plans within the context of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and the Malabo Declaration.

The type of assistance and its entry points have varied considerably from one region to the next. In the Latin America and the Caribbean region, FAO has long worked on school meals, nutrition education and family agriculture, including with the support provided under the FAO Brazil programme to countries of the region and beyond. For example, with FAO and

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60 UNSCN was initially hosted by FAO and moved to Geneva in 1987. Currently, FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO are founding members, working together to provide global strategic guidance and advocacy in nutrition, to foster joint nutrition action, to harmonize concepts, methodologies and guidelines, policies and strategies, to facilitate knowledge exchange, to communicate on global trends and to dialogue with stakeholders. The UNSCN Strategic Plan 2016-2020 identifies the comparative advantage of UNSCN as being rooted in it being universal in scope (not limited to specific group or categories of countries), advocating a human-right based approach to nutrition, concentrated on the UN system, and working on all forms of malnutrition.
Brazil assistance Costa Rican authorities have taken important steps to strengthen their school feeding programme towards a healthier, balanced and nutritious food supply in school canteens. The Ministry of Public Education updated school menus with a healthy eating approach, taking into account culture and local food patterns, and designed an online course to promote the installation of educational gardens in the schools of the country. Moreover, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock promotes the articulation between family farming and public food purchases in eight areas of the country. The Costa Rican school meals programme experience is being documented in collaboration with the UN-affiliated University for Peace (*Universidad para la Paz*, San José). The Country Office has also supported the foundation of the Costa Rican network for the reduction of food losses and waste, introducing a non-traditional issue on the agenda of different sectors and actors.

The focus of FAO’s work on nutrition in the region is now moving towards addressing overweight and obesity and consumer protection, e.g. supporting the development of food laws to protect consumers, including labelling, in Chile, or forbidding ultra-processed food and sugar-sweetened beverages in schools in El Salvador. At regional level, FAO in Latin America has started to get involved in the discussions on these topics in partnership with PAHO. This work is innovative and involves linkages with municipalities, local governments and the private sector.

In Asia and the Pacific, there is an accepted need for dietary diversification. In this context, FAO is supporting crop diversification through the Zero Hunger Challenge (a work often linked to economic development through high value crops) and supported the integration of nutrition in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ (ASEAN) Plan of Action on Food Security (2015-2020) and Food, Agriculture and Forestry Vision (2016-2025). The ASEAN Nutrition Declaration (Manila, November 2017) has further reinforced this dynamic. The challenge now is to translate the ASEAN Nutrition Declaration into action. Recently, the IFPRI-FAO conference on accelerating the end of hunger and malnutrition held in Bangkok in November 2018 identifies accelerators – policies, tools, interventions – that could potentially speed up progress towards SDG2.

In Bangladesh, a country very receptive to nutrition considerations, FAO has established a convincing presence in policy and information for food and nutrition security. After ICN2 FAO supported the Government of Bangladesh to develop a costed Nutrition Plan of Action and to embed the 60 ICN2 recommendations into sectorial planning, including in agriculture (crops, livestock, fisheries, etc.). In Nepal, FAO has supported the development of the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan and the implementation of existing policies and plans through a number of field programmes, including the World Bank-financed Agriculture and Food Security Project (AFSP) and UN joint Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (RWEE) project. Both AFSP and RWEE promote nutrition education and the diversification of food production and consumption through Farmer Field Schools on homestead gardens, special nutritious foods for 6-24 months old children, livestock raising and fruit trees. The AFSP also strengthens district level coordination structures through District Nutrition Coordinators, to ensure a synchronized and harmonized implementation of nutrition actions.

Much of the policy and governance work under Outcome 2 has taken place in Africa, for reasons related to availability of donor funding and greater sensitization of national authorities on the importance of food security and nutrition. Africa’s political commitment to nutrition is growing. Since agriculture remains the main source of food and livelihood for the poor in the continent, agricultural policies and interventions need to pay attention to nutrition. The 23rd assembly of African Union heads of state and Government in Malabo,
Equatorial Guinea, in 2014 passed three declarations with specific commitments on nutrition, including ending hunger by 2025 and reducing child stunting to 10 percent and underweight to 5 percent by 2025. The African Union Commission (AUC) and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) have spearheaded several initiatives to improve nutritional outcomes, such as the African Regional Nutrition Strategy for 2015–2025, the African Task Force on Food and Nutrition Development, and the CAADP Agriculture Nutrition Capacity Development Initiative (2011–2013). The latter helped to strengthen countries’ capacity for mainstreaming nutrition in their CAADP processes and national agriculture and food security investment plans, with FAO support. FAO has also worked with the Pan-African Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition and numerous country parliamentarian groups to help promote this agenda.

Since 2011, FAO has worked hard to help African countries mainstream nutrition considerations and indicators for their Nutrition into Agriculture Investment Plans. A total of 49 countries – i.e. nearly the entire continent – and six Regional Economic Communities have been supported in the development of their nutrition-sensitive policies and investment plans within the CAADP framework. All are at different stages of development and implementation. For instance, in Nigeria FAO supported the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to develop the Agriculture and FNS Strategy 2016–2025, ensuring nutrition was mainstreamed. The Country Office has a Nutrition Specialist whose assignment is to develop an FSN strategy for the Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA), and who started exploring ways to support the national school feeding programme following a request from the federal government. In Rwanda, FAO is providing support to the development of the fourth Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA 4). A draft validated through the Agriculture Sector Working Group (ASWG) was discussed at a high-level policy dialogue organized by the Parliament in November 2017. The PSTA aims at explicit nutrition outcomes in terms of protein, calcium and iron intake per capita, and vouch to promote “flexible extension service models that also includes business management, climate smart agriculture, and nutrition sensitive agriculture”.

One of the earliest regional plans supported by the FAO CAADP initiative was the ECOWAS Regional Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security Investment Programme 2016-2020 (RAIP-FNS), which covers the 15 member states of ECOWAS. ECOWAS works closely with the Permanent Interstate Committee for drought control in the Sahel (CILSS) to strengthen food security and nutrition information and early warning systems and further develop the data collection and analysis process of the Cadre Harmonisé. In this respect, RAIP includes social safety nets with focus on fundamental social rights, i.e. minimum health service coverage as well as the use of conditional and unconditional cash transfers activated in case of an emergency.

A review of the impact of the first ECOWAP concluded to a mixed picture: on the one hand, all West African countries registered reduction in food deficits over the corresponding

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61 Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine (UEMOA).


63 Since 2004, the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) has developed and implemented three phases of Strategic Plans for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA), the main policy framework for agriculture development in Rwanda, developed under the CAADP framework.
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period, and this improving trend was stronger in West Africa than elsewhere in the continent. On the other hand, an estimated 25 million West Africans were still affected by undernourishment.\textsuperscript{64}

FAO’s support to CAADP has had a number of important ‘spin-offs’: it made good use of the NSA guidelines, attempting to adapt them to the regional context; nutrition country papers were produced including an analysis of the degree to which key national policies are nutrition-sensitive; an e-learning course on Agriculture investment was developed based on this work; and guidance and training material were also developed for the integration of nutrition into Agriculture Extension Services, in collaboration with ENACT/ENAF.\textsuperscript{65} The FAO Investment Centre Division (TCI) also developed the FAO Strategy for Support to Investment\textsuperscript{66} and guidelines for Country Programme Managers on mainstreaming nutrition in investment programmes.

Outcome 3: Strengthened national, regional and local capacities

Finding 14: There have been a number of promising capacity building projects implemented since the Strategy was promulgated. However, FAO’s main achievements in nutrition to date relate to advocacy and sensitization at the global level, more so than to the actual delivery of tested approaches and capacities in the field. FAO is ill-equipped to roll-out its Nutrition Strategy at country level due to a lack of adequate capacity in nutrition in most FAO country offices.

A number of interesting initiatives have been implemented since the Strategy was promulgated that contribute to capacity building. Perhaps the most promising initiative in this regard is the ENACT/ENAF training curricula to support the development of nutrition education at university level in Africa. The courses were rated as extremely helpful by those applying them. An evaluation conducted in 2016 found that ENACT/ENAF has produced high-quality material.

ESN and regional offices’ work on National School Nutrition Strategies has already been mentioned, and was found particularly impressive in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in a number of Africa countries (e.g. Cabo Verde, Malawi, Mozambique, and Sao Tome and Principe). There have also been several success stories in Africa with potential for upscaling on urban nutrition, using street food vending as an entry point in Ghana and Tanzania, the integration of nutrition into agriculture extension curricula promoted in a few countries (e.g. Burkina Faso), and bio-fortification and fortification in the Gambia and Zimbabwe.

Very significant achievements have been reported in Bangladesh by the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme (NFPCSP) and the subsequent MUCH programme, building on FAO previous support to Bangladesh. This long-term effort generated a set of concrete policy frameworks that have been officially adopted and put into practice, and introduced new organizational processes, standards and systems to build the capacity of the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) in the Ministry of Food. The FIRST facility was

\textsuperscript{64} Has ten-year implementation of the regional agriculture policy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAP) contributed to improve nutrition? - A publication in the framework of the Regional Projects GCP/RAF/476 & 477/ GER “Establishing a zero hunger initiative in West Africa and mainstreaming nutrition in CAADP”, FAO-RAF 2016.

\textsuperscript{65} Final cluster evaluation of GCP/RAF/476/GER and GCP/RAF/477/GER - Draft - March 2018.

\textsuperscript{66} In draft.
designed based on the Bangladesh experience, and has a strong capacity building component as well.

118 Two-thirds of the world’s population will live in cities by 2050. The New Urban Agenda (NUA) adopted during the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III, Quito, October 2016) recognizes the need to improve urban food systems in order to improve urban nutrition. Within this framework, FAO launched in December 2016 with the Multipartner Programme Support Mechanism (FMM) funding an innovative pilot project called NADHALI (Developing Sustainable Food Systems for Urban Areas: Pilot Works in Nairobi, DHaka, and Lima) to assist municipalities meet commitments made under the NUA. The project developed a tool for rapid appraisal of urban food systems and promoted participatory food governance mechanisms called Food Liaison Advisory Groups to facilitate inclusive food system planning.

**Figure 3:** Utility of FAO’s contributions to addressing malnutrition (according to external survey respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normative guidance on nutrition-mainstreaming in agriculture</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination &amp; follow up on global activities (e.g., ICN2, UN Decade of Action)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition assessments and information management</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building technical and managerial capacity for nutrition and food systems</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition education, communication and consumer protection</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies and legal frameworks</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convening power (bringing stakeholders together)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective delivery of nutrition results on the ground</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building technical &amp; managerial capacity for nutrition / food systems</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency programming nutrition outcomes in crises</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: PIRES, no time series available*

119 There are quite a few other examples and the initiatives already mentioned under previous outcomes (such as support to CAADP under Outcome 2) have also built capacities. However, in analysing results achieved in nutrition, this evaluation has consistently found a strong contrast between the global and the country levels. FAO’s main achievements in nutrition to date relate to advocacy and sensitization at the global level, more so than to the actual delivery of tested approaches and capacities in the field. This disconnect applies to various degree across all three outcomes of the Strategy, and was confirmed by a survey of external partners conducted as part of this evaluation that highlighted better utility of FAO’s work in global functions than in local ones (Figure 3).

120 The most likely explanation for this chasm between the global and national levels is that most FAO country offices lack adequate nutritional capacity to develop partnerships, establish a presence and mobilize resources. Most of the complaints in the external survey related to FAO’s weak presence in nutrition at country level. As pointed out in section 4.3, few are the Country Offices that have raised significant resources for nutrition. This is due to lack of local capacity but also lack of awareness among FAO representatives and national staff about FAO’s role and capacity in this area.

121 Another possible reason is that, as already pointed out, the FAO Nutrition Strategy paid limited attention to implementation issues. In particular, the FAO Nutrition Strategy lacks
regional chapters delineating where the Organization needs to focus its nutrition work in Africa, Asia, etc.

b) Knowledge management

Evaluation Question 4: Is the implementation of the Strategy and results achieved monitored and reported upon? Is the work of FAO in nutrition systematized and documented? Are there key lessons learned and best practices from countries and regions that can serve to guide the action of FAO in nutrition in the future or in other regions or countries? Are normative products and the field programme building upon one another? Is FAO leveraging information technologies, and managing nutrition knowledge and expertise more effectively since 2012?

Finding 15: The Nutrition Strategy lacks an accountability framework in the form of a set of corporate performance indicators and a reporting mechanism. This has deprived ESN of leverage in its relationship with other FAO units and decentralized offices for nutrition mainstreaming, and impaired its capacity to stay abreast of and support the numerous nutrition-related initiatives now implemented across the Organization.

122 As noted earlier, the Nutrition Strategy enunciates broad criteria and principles for FAO’s work in nutrition but does not articulate a series of indicators and there is no regular reporting system which could help track implementation progress. It was initially envisaged that the Strategy would not need a specific accountability framework because results against it would be reported through the accountability framework of the Strategic Framework, notably the Programme Implementation Report (PIR). While this rationale is well taken and may have reduced reporting requirements, the Strategy would have benefited from a clearer delineation of what FAO committed to under it, i.e. through a list of “minimum standards” as done in the FAO Policy on Gender Equality. Developing and populating a set of indicators of progress would also have helped report against Outcome 6.5, described as a challenge.

123 A periodic reporting system for the Strategy would also have given ESN greater leverage in its relationship with other FAO units and decentralized offices for nutrition mainstreaming, a better capacity to stay abreast of and support the numerous nutrition-related initiatives implemented by FAO, and some incentive to address implementation issues more proactively. It might also help raise the visibility of FAO’s work in this domain with Member States and other partners.

Finding 16: FAO projects implemented at community level do not generally measure or report on their contribution to nutritional outcomes, e.g. more diversified diets. The available monitoring systems are the result of individual initiatives, and the data produced tends to lack quality and comparability with other projects – hence the power of results is often limited. As a result, FAO is not in a position to rigorously test its approaches to nutrition, identify unintended consequences, showcase its best contributions for upscaling and fundraising and generally steer its field programme towards better nutritional impact.

124 Lessons learned and best practices from countries and regions are not being systematically collected and shared, due to insufficient monitoring and documentation of promising practices to feed back into policy work and share with relevant actors. The available monitoring systems are the result of individual initiatives, and the data produced tends to lack quality and comparability with other projects – hence the power of results is often limited.

limited. Even the usually quite thorough NSA guidelines initially lacked a section on improved monitoring and evaluation of nutrition-sensitive agricultural programmes.\textsuperscript{68}

As a consequence of insufficient monitoring and lessons learning, FAO is not in a position to test its approaches to nutrition, guard against potential negative consequences,\textsuperscript{69} showcase its best contributions for upscaling and fundraising and generally steer its field programme towards better nutritional impact.

**Finding 17:** Some progress has been achieved on documenting food-based approaches since the Nutrition Strategy committed FAO to evidence building for nutrition. A number of papers prepared for ICN2 explored some of the nutrition-sensitive pathways in depth, and FAO has published knowledge products evidencing the nutritional outcomes of food-based approaches.

Historically, links between food systems and nutrition have been understudied as compared to the effect of direct and often health-based interventions. For instance, the 2008 Lancet Series of articles on Maternal and Child Nutrition\textsuperscript{70} estimated high rates of return on a number of "nutrition-specific" interventions, such as micronutrient supplementation, the promotion of breastfeeding and complementary feeding. In 2013, the Lancet Series on Maternal and Child Nutrition discussed the agricultural sector’s potential to contribute to improved nutrition, but stated a lack of evidence. A similar conclusion was reached by a 2014 UNSCN review of country-level programming in nutrition-sensitive agriculture.\textsuperscript{71}

The specificities of nutrition-sensitive interventions also need to be recognized. Assessing the cost-effectiveness of an intervention that has a direct pathway to impact (e.g. vitamin A supplements, when ingested, affect vitamin A status) is doable and conceptually meaningful inasmuch as vitamin A supplements have a certain cost on the global market and lead to reasonably well-known effects in our bodies. Nothing comparable can even be conceived for an NSA intervention. The pathways from agriculture and food systems to nutrition are socio-economic in nature. They depend on numerous, complex ecological, economic and cultural factors and are therefore lengthier, more indirect and much harder to prove empirically than the simpler biological pathways mobilized by nutrition-specific interventions. They rely on a variety of policies, trade options, economic incentives and participatory approaches which cannot be standardized and whose costs are hard to model and predict. They are several steps removed from a single identifiable impact, and they have a wide array of potential impacts on many different nutrients. Seeking to compare direct and indirect nutrition interventions based on their relative cost-effectiveness would not be using a level playing field.

\textsuperscript{68} A module on “designing and monitoring nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food system programmes” which include a full section on designing a monitoring system, is under preparation.

\textsuperscript{69} As per its own NSA guidelines, FAO ought to be in a position to ensure that none of its projects and programmes negatively impact on nutrition. For example, dairy programmes that aim to increase income for nutrition need to make sure that cow’s milk is not being used for children under six months; irrigation projects and exposure to pesticides involve health hazards with possible negative impacts on the nutritional status of mothers and children; market-oriented approaches can result in nutritious food being sold rather than consumed by producers, as was thought to be the case with quinoa at some point, etc.

\textsuperscript{70} https://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-undernutrition

Other methodologies are needed, not focused on cost-effectiveness, but able to deal with complexity and sustainability where the local context is of the essence and therefore recognizing the need to collect qualitative feedback and robust contextual variables in order to control for extraneous influences. Even the indicators of success are different: given the modus operandi of agricultural projects, impact on diet or food access is the highest level for which it is realistic to expect observable changes through the use of indicators such as the MDD-W or the FIES. FAO routinely advocates for assessment of household and individual dietary diversity for precisely this reason.

Some progress has been achieved on this front since the Nutrition Strategy committed FAO to evidence building for nutrition. A number of papers prepared for ICN2 explored some of the nutrition-sensitive pathways in depth, and FAO has published knowledge products evidencing the nutritional outcomes of food-based approaches, for instance:

- *Ex-post evidence on the effectiveness of policies targeted at promoting healthier diets*, by Mario Mazzocchi (FAO 2017), a very thorough review of the evidence backing a number of policy options for nutrition – such as labelling regulations, advertising restrictions, or subsidies and voucher schemes related to food.

- *Integration of Nutrition in Agriculture Extension Services in Africa: A desk review of country case studies, pre-service and in-service training materials* (FAO/RAF 2017) documents countries' experiences in integrating nutrition in their agricultural extension systems.

- *Integrating agriculture and nutrition education for improved young child nutrition: Programme lessons* (FAO 2016), the result of a research conducted with the Justus Liebig University (Giessen, Germany) about two FAO projects on complementary feeding practices for young infants, implemented in Cambodia and Malawi. The study recognized the impact of nutrition education on children's dietary intake and growth (see also section 4.2.c on gender).

- *Study to Identify and Analyse Country-Level Experiences in Strengthening Food and Nutrition Education within the Framework of School Food and Nutrition Programmes* (FAO/RLC, not dated), which usefully documents the experience of El Salvador in nutrition education, based on real schools experience.

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73 [http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6891e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6891e.pdf)


75 [http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7736e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7736e.pdf)
Besides, studies have been issued by the World Bank, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI),76 UNSCN,77 Action Contre la Faim78 and other actors. With FAO assistance, the REACH Secretariat has also compiled an excellent, pragmatic Compendium of Actions for Nutrition which describes in detail a variety of food-based and direct nutrition approaches and provides some literature review on their effectiveness.79 Recently attention has moved towards assessing ‘food environments’, i.e. the availability of safe, nutritious food at a reasonable price in the immediate environment of consumers.80

In terms of leveraging information technologies to manage nutrition knowledge and expertise more effectively, ESN has helped develop useful e-learning courses as described above. Although there is no community of practice within FAO specifically dedicated to promote knowledge sharing on nutrition, there are a few other platforms such as the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (“FSN Forum”) hosted by the FAO Agricultural Development Economics Division (ESA) provides a useful online platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue on food security and nutrition,81 the Food Security Information Network (FSIN), a forum supported by FAO, WFP and IFPRI on food security data and indicators, and the Global Inter-Cluster Nutrition Working Group (ICNWG). UNSCN also hosts a range of communities of practice which FAO staff can access, including the Agriculture-Nutrition Community of Practice at the interface of agriculture and nutrition, where FAO material is generally circulated. Finally, a global community of practice has recently been launched on the subject of food losses.82 There are also a number of regional networks, such as the Asia Pacific Network on Nutrition that provide avenues for enriching technical work.

c) Gender

Evaluation Question 5: How has gender mainstreaming been incorporated into nutrition programmes? What is the evidence for linkages between women’s empowerment and improved nutrition, focusing on access and utilization of food at the household level? How can it be factored into agriculture and food security interventions, and is this connection leveraged in FAO’s work?

Finding 18: Data indicates a modest rise in the number and value of FAO nutrition-sensitive projects taking into consideration women’s potential contributions to better nutrition, with ample room for progress. Projects jointly implemented with other UN agencies frequently target women, girls, infants and young children. Among the reviewed interventions, nutrition education has proven a particularly useful entry point for enhancing nutritional outcomes, and could be more

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76 E.g.: From agriculture to nutrition: Concepts, pathways and synergies, World Bank, 2007.
81 Available at http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/home
systematically included in FAO projects. Food processing and local marketing are good opportunities to generate income of women, but remain underutilized.

132 The now classic ‘Lancet’ impact pathway diagram for nutrition interventions (Figure 4) features food access, care practices and the health and sanitation environment as key determinants of human diets and health, which in turn govern our nutritional status. Women’s empowerment is generally viewed as essential in achieving progress on all these determinants of nutrition because women in most countries are heavily involved in food production or access, in care practices including cooking practices, and in caring for their children’s and other family members’ health and hygiene.

133 Hence the central role of women is in food system pathways to nutrition, including those concerning food production and diversification, nutritional education, school meals and drudgery reduction. More fundamentally, malnutrition and particularly undernutrition is often an intergenerational (mother-to-child) cycle: malnourished women tend to give birth and to raise malnourished children. Women’s nutrition is therefore seen as essential to break the malnutrition cycle, in addition to improving the nutrition status of women themselves.

134 In the relevant scientific literature, greater equality within households is generally associated with positive nutritional outcomes. However, the overall picture is not without nuance. For instance, work load and hours worked correlate with stunting and wasting; and membership by mothers in various community activities and groups may reduce time available for caring and breastfeeding. A recent IFPRI paper on the issue83 concludes that “agricultural interventions targeting women and aiming to provide opportunities for empowerment must look at unintended consequences, particularly on time use.”

Figure 4: Simplified impact pathway framework of investment projects (this framework identifies six outcome areas that are directly affected by agriculture, rural development and food systems, and how these can influence nutrition


83 Gender and women’s empowerment in nutrition-sensitive agriculture: A review, new evidence, guidelines and implications for programming, by Agnes Quisumbing, Kathryn Sproule, Elena Martinez, Hazel Malapit, IFPRI undated.
The overlap between gender and nutrition is evidently nothing new. Several knowledge products factsheets have been produced as early as the 1990s and more recently. FAO and IFPRI are currently preparing a review of new evidence buttressing the case for women’s empowerment for nutrition-sensitive agricultural programming, identifying dimensions and indicators of women’s empowerment and how those influence different diet and nutrition outcomes. The tool used is the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) – developed by IFPRI and USAID/Feed the Future – assessing five main domains of women’s empowerment: production (decision over); resources (ownership/transfer of assets and access to credit); income (control over and use); leadership (including group membership and self-confidence); and time use/workloads (allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks as well as leisure). Hence, it goes well beyond the reproductive and caregiving roles of women. What is interesting about the WEAI (piloted to be used in FAO’s work), is that it has the potential to enable programme designers and policymakers to identify areas of women’s disempowerment in relation to men’s through household surveys involving both male and female household members and to understand where to intervene in order to enhance both men’s and women’s contribution to food and nutrition security.

An analysis of the portfolio of nutrition-sensitive projects estimated at about USD 62 million or 10.8 percent of the total analysed portfolio of the total budgetary value of projects targeting women, girls, infants and young children and approved during the period 2012-2017. This is up from a mere USD 2 million during the period 2004-2010. Projects targeting children and the youth were valued at USD 10 million during the period 2012-2017 (1.7 percent of total), down from 16 million in 2004-2010.

This data is only indicative, but it does testify to a modest rise on the number and value of FAO nutrition-sensitive projects taking in consideration women’s potential contributions to better nutrition. However, there is ample room for progress: the FAO Policy on Gender Equality stipulates that “30 percent of FAO’s operational work and budget at the country and regional levels [should be] allocated to women-specific targeted interventions” (minimum standard 14).

The type of projects varies: resilience projects targeting households with malnourished children under five and pregnant and lactating women (e.g. in Yemen and Syria); value chain projects which can impact nutritional outcomes of women through both the consumption and income pathways depending on the context; nutrition education programmes; Dimitra community discussion clubs coupled with Farmer Field Schools; etc.

Projects jointly implemented with other UN agencies are frequent among projects targeting women, girls, infants and young children. For instance, a project implemented in Ngozi province in Burundi aimed at reducing stunting prevalence through nutrition education and support to egg and vegetable production, and was implemented jointly with UNICEF and WFP. The joint UN project on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (RWEE) implemented in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda is another case in point.

Nutrition education has proven a particularly useful entry point for enhancing nutritional outcomes, so much so that it could be more systematically included in FAO projects. FAO has even documented the impact of two nutrition education activities implemented in

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Cambodia and Malawi clearly demonstrating the impact of nutrition education on children’s dietary intake and growth. The Malawi project (GDCP/MLW/001/FLA – Improving Food Security and Nutrition Policies and Programme Outreach) targeted about some 35 000 farmers, including families with children aged 6 to 18 months, and included trials of improved practices (TIPs) in Kasungu and Mzimba Districts on complementary infant feeding practices. After the nutrition education sessions, women reported being able to use more food groups in the preparation of enriched porridges (Vitamin A rich vegetables, and animal source foods).

Interestingly, the nutrition education projects in both Cambodia and Malawi targeted not only mothers, but also grandmothers and fathers in their role as caregivers. In certain contexts, women might be unable to spend time preparing a nutritious meal; hence, the projects also reached out to fathers and grandmothers, providing an opportunity to move somewhat away from traditional roles.

In Niger, Farmer Field Schools have been used to provide nutrition education. The Dimitra discussion clubs, a community-driven approach to empower rural women and men, provide another useful channel to disseminate nutrition education messages: in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dimitra clubs were instrumental in reducing the influence of food taboos, which in some communities resulted in enhanced consumption of alternative high-protein source foods by women. There are approximately 2 000 Dimitra clubs active in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal with an estimated 60 000 members, of which 60 percent are women.

Food processing and local marketing are good opportunities to generate income for women and youth, particularly where gender imbalances and discrimination are highest, but remain underutilized. Overall, nutrition-sensitive value chains are still rarely implemented. The mass of value chain projects focusses on value addition and economic impacts, but there are a few interesting achievements. For instance in Swaziland, 36 women groups and 603 beneficiaries were trained on sweet potato processing and preservation methods to diversify the utilization of sweet potatoes at household level. However, tracing the nutritional outcomes in value chain interventions can be extremely context-specific. For example in a project promoting dairy value chains in Ethiopia, focus group discussions were conducted and consumption habits were traced, leading to the conclusion that beneficiaries’ awareness of the nutritional value of dairy products did not necessarily translate into behaviour change. In the Degem and Dejen woredas (districts), fresh milk was sold, rather than being consumed or processed, and while women tended to consume processed by-products with low nutritive value like whey and buttermilk, milk in the households was to be consumed by the children and men.

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4.3 Efficiency of work processes to support FAO’s work in nutrition

a) Resources

Evaluation Question 6: How much additional resources (financial and human at global, regional and country level) were mobilized to implement the Strategy, or more broadly to provide nutrition-sensitive support to Member States? How are the capacities of FAO to deliver in the field of nutrition at global, regional and country levels?

Finding 19: The FAO field programme related to nutrition has more than doubled and evolved qualitatively since the promulgation of the Strategy. Nevertheless, FAO’s programmatic presence in nutrition at country level remains highly variable and dependent on support from a narrow donor base.

The amount of resources mobilized by FAO for nutrition-relevant projects has grown significantly since the adoption of the Nutrition Strategy, as shown by a portfolio analysis using the Field Programme Management Information System. Over the period 2012-2017, 340 such projects were identified, valued at USD 568 million, while there were only 134 such projects with a total budget of USD 231 million during the period 2004-2010. In financial terms, the portfolio of projects relevant to nutrition has therefore more than doubled between the two periods, with an increase of 246 percent. The evaluation also analysed a smaller set of projects that designated AGN/ESN as their Lead Technical Unit. Eighty-one such projects were identified for the period 2012-2017, worth a total of USD 123 million. This represents a 143 percent increase as compared to the period 2004-2010.

Arguably, this comes from a very low base, and represents a mere 2 percent of the USD 4.5 billion per year of ODA estimated in the 2018 Global Nutrition Report for the period 2012-2016.

The European Union is the largest donor for FAO’s nutrition work. Other key donors include Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, Flanders Cooperation and the World Bank-administered Global Agriculture & Food Security Program (GAFSP) trust fund.

Region-wise, the largest increases between 2012 and 2017 are found in Africa, Near East and in interregional projects. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the nutrition-relevant project portfolio appears to have contracted over the same period (Figure 5). Africa has been a major beneficiary of the wave of new projects approved after the Strategy was promulgated (Figure 6). It benefits from 14 out of the 20 largest country-level projects approved since 2012 and identified as nutrition-sensitive by this evaluation, and from 62 percent of the total resources mobilized over the same period for nutrition-sensitive projects (see Table 1 below).

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88 The approach involved two steps: first a query retrieved all projects with the terms “nutrition”, “nutricion”, “food composition tables”, “malnutrition”, and “diet” in the project title and/or project objective fields; then a more in-depth review of the more than 1000 projects thus retrieved to eliminate those which only used the term “nutrition” cursorily, e.g. in the phrase “food and nutrition security”, without explicitly incorporating nutrition objectives into their design.
Figure 5: Evolution of FAO Field Programme on Nutrition, by region (projects designed to tackle nutrition in a specific manner)

The portfolio is dominated by a few large projects – such as FIRST and INFORMED, AFIKEPO in Malawi, Smallholder Agricultural Productivity Restoration and Enhancement Project (SAPREP) in Yemen, or the Agriculture and Food Security Project (ASFP) in Nepal – and therefore this growth in nutrition-sensitive programming is not evenly spread across regions and countries: the nutrition-related portfolio increased in some countries while it decreased in others. As an illustration of how country office leadership can make a difference, 2 among the 20 largest nutrition-sensitive country-level projects are located in Malawi, for a total of USD 32 million, and 4 are in the Gambia, for over USD 28 million.

Table 1: Resources mobilized since 2012 by nutrition-sensitive projects, by FAO region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAO regions</th>
<th>Total Budget (DWH)</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>292 628 856</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>45 937 100</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>62 528</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>12 420 429</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near East</td>
<td>47 748 044</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>75 026 067</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>473 823 024</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Evaluation of the Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition**

**Figure 6**: Funds mobilized in nutrition-sensitive projects, per year (only projects after 2010)

![Graph showing funds mobilized in nutrition-sensitive projects](image)

A quarter of the whole portfolio was approved in 2013 for Africa, mostly funded by EU, right after the adoption of the Nutrition Strategy and 2 years after the nutrition evaluation of 2010-2011.

Mainly FISP funded projects in Malawi and Gambia (AGF/10/141/E & AGF/09/141/E).

Mainly SAFREP in Yemen (AGF/15/141/E & AGF/16/141/E).

Includes two large EU-funded projects in Malawi and Gambia (AGF/10/141/E & AGF/09/141/E).

**b) Organizational set-up**

**Evaluation Question 7**: Is the new configuration of ESN adequate to support nutrition work in the Organization? Is it leading to greater synergies between the different areas of work within ESN and to a better positioning of nutrition within the Organization?

**Finding 20**: While FAO human resources for nutrition have remained stable in quantitative terms, a number of key staff have left ESN over the evaluated period, weakening the division’s technical capacity and hindering progress in mainstreaming nutrition. The nutrition division was restructured twice during the evaluated period, but synergies have yet to fully materialize.

**Finding 21**: The capacity of regional and subregional offices to backstop country offices in nutrition has grown to a significant extent during the evaluated period, to very good effect on the field programme.

149 The FAO organizational set-up for nutrition was restructured twice during the evaluation period, in 2013 and 2016. In 2013, the former Nutrition and Consumer Protection division (AGN) under the Agriculture Development Department (ES) separated from the Codex and food safety group and moved to ES. In 2016, the Nutrition Division merged with the agribusiness specialists, food technologists and food value chains professionals from the ex-AGS division and became the Nutrition and Food Systems Division (current ESN).

150 Owing to these changes, an analysis of the evolution of human resources planned in the regular Programme of Work and Budget across the three biennia is far from straightforward. A lot of the changes observed in successive PWB reflect re-arrangements of the organigram or of budget practice, for instance the allocation of dedicated funding to Strategic Programmes starting from 2016. This Strategic Programme funding is allocated to technical divisions (including ESN) through Service Level Agreements but these transfers are not planned for in the PWB.
In terms of core resources, nutrition-related work areas in the PWB represented some 8.8 percent of all net appropriations from assessed contributions over the evaluation period (see Table 2 below), with no apparent increase over time. Since 2016, nutrition has been allocated resources specifically to mainstream it in the planning, implementation and monitoring of FAO’s outputs, outcomes and strategic objectives.89 The core budget allocations for ESN as a percentage of all net appropriations from assessed contributions have declined, from 2.2 percent in 2012-2013 to 1.8 percent in 2018-2019.

A review of posts allocations indicates that ESN has currently a comparable level of professional posts (30) as AGN used to have in 2012-2013 (28), while the number of General Staff posts has been halved from 18 to 9 over the same period (Figure 7).90 However, PWB posts are not necessarily filled with actual regular programme staff. In fact, ESN has had a number of vacancies, which it used to hire human resources on a short-term basis through consultancy contracts.

There are currently around 22 professional staff in ESN and a small number of consultants. In addition to headquarters staff, there are twelve nutrition professionals posted in regional and subregional offices. Many of these professionals cover food safety issues as well as nutrition, as they were established under AGN when the two functions were in the same technical unit.

### Table 2: Allocation of core resources to nutrition in PWBs (USD thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant items</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Objective H (former Strategic Framework)</td>
<td>91 164</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Objective 1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>94 617</td>
<td>84 391</td>
<td>82 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 6.5: mainstream nutrition</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2 223</td>
<td>3 418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total estimated budget for nutrition</td>
<td>91 164</td>
<td>94 617</td>
<td>86 614</td>
<td>85 546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition budget as % of total appropriation</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESN/AGN budget allocations</td>
<td>22 715</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESN/AGN budget as a % of total RP resources</td>
<td>2.17%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total appropriation (net)</td>
<td>1 047 318</td>
<td>1 005 648</td>
<td>1 005 635</td>
<td>1 005 635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

89 The reviewed MTP of 2014-17 and 2018-21 have protected resources (USD 3.3 million) for coordination and mainstreaming of work on nutrition, mainly in Outcome 6.5 in follow-up to ICN2, and also through increased capacity in decentralized offices. For the biennium 2018-2021, two of the ten higher priority areas in the Programme of Work for which resources are reallocated to increase technical capacity are for: “food systems including nutrition and food safety, particularly at country level” (USD 2.8 million) and for UNSCN, hosted by FAO Secretariat, Objective 6 (USD 1 million).

90 Some of the PWB reviewed described an effort to raise the number of professional posts in nutrition, e.g. the Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17 (C 2015/3), para. 113. and 117.
These changes signalled a greater recognition of the importance of nutrition within the Organization. However, the merge with AGS remains less than fully achieved: the concerned staff working on food losses and other value chains aspects rarely interact with their nutritionist colleagues. The synergies that were hoped for between the ex-AGS staff and the rest of the division have yet to fully materialize, which might in part explain the Division’s difficulties in developing a fully integrated work plan, noted in a recent audit.91

Another concern is that a significant number of key historical staff have left FAO/ESN over the evaluated period, either because they retired, joined another organization or moved to a field position. This phenomenon has qualitatively affected ESN’s technical capacity in that the departing staff were often highly experienced and motivated and had accumulated substantial knowledge and institutional memory. The audit quoted above noted that “as at February 2018, ESN had seven vacant posts” and that “in 2017, two P4 staff went on mobility with their posts and one P5 staff is on secondment”.

It must be recognized that the Division has had limited control over some of the general managerial and functioning constraints of the Organization as a whole, such as the long centralized processes to fill vacant positions and corporate mobility imperatives. Evidently, staff mobility is meant to build capacity in regional and subregional offices, and effectively during the evaluation period, the capacity of regional and subregional offices to backstop country offices in nutrition has been built to a significant extent, and to good effect on the field programme. For example, a recent evaluation of the El Niño response in Southern

Africa[^2] identified the presence of two nutritionists in the Harare Subregional Office and the Johannesburg Resilience Hub as the main factor behind a growth in good quality FAO nutrition programmes in the subregion. Many country offices have nutritionists as well, most of whom are paid out of voluntary contributions or Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) projects.

c) **Mainstreaming nutrition in FAO**

**Evaluation Question 8:** To what the extent is nutrition internalized as a cross-cutting theme in the mindsets of FAO staff? How did the delivery mechanisms of the new Strategic Framework mainstream nutrition themes and work? How efficient are the modalities of collaboration between ESN and the Strategic Programme teams, as well as with other technical units and decentralized offices?

**Finding 22:** In addition to undertaking its own work programme, ESN liaises with Strategic Programme teams, regional and subregional offices and other FAO units to “mainstream” nutrition into their own programme of work, and ultimately in those of the countries. In practice, ESN’s collaboration with other FAO units appears ad hoc and often insufficient to promote nutrition mainstreaming.

**Finding 23:** The guidance for nutrition mainstreaming in CPFs is brief and well-conceived, but not enough to ensure systematic mainstreaming. The country backstopping systems put in place by the other two Rome-based agencies (IFAD and WFP) in their own effort to mainstream nutrition are more comprehensive and include a knowledge management system based on programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E); backstopping staff at headquarters; surge capacity i.e. the capacity to send nutritionists to countries on short notice through partnership agreements with other organizations; as well as guidelines and trainings.

The overall feedback obtained from FAO staff during this evaluation was that ESN is stronger in its traditional normative function than in working with non-nutritionists and connecting with other FAO units to mainstream nutrition in FAO’s minds and programmes. This was confirmed in a questionnaire survey sent to FAO staff and consultants, whose responses indicated a stronger performance in specialized normative functions than in collaborative ones. There have been many positive examples of nutrition mainstreaming, as listed below, but many seem to result from individual efforts rather than from a systematic approach.

**Strategic Objectives**

The reviewed Strategic Framework[^3] endorsed in 2013, brought a new approach to programming and budgeting. Five Strategic Programmes were designed in 2014, and Strategic Programme teams set up in 2015 to bring coordination, collaboration and focus to the work of all FAO units under each of these five programme area, and facilitate country offices access to technical support from headquarters and regional offices. Nutrition was reflected in the reviewed Strategic Framework both as part of Strategic Objective 1 on the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, and since January 2016 as a cross-

[^3]: CL 145/4 Reviewed Strategic Framework and Outline of the Medium Term Plan 2014-17

http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/026/me999e.pdf
cutting theme mainstreamed in the work of all Strategic Objectives and described in organizational Outcome 6.5.94

159 Under the new structure, Strategic Programme teams drive the work planning process in delivery of the strategic framework for all contributing units, and channel resources from assessed contributions to technical units based on jointly agreed Service Level Agreements. Within this system, the extent and quality of collaboration between FAO technical units and each Strategic Programme team is a key determinant to the degree to which a particular piece of work is taken up by FAO as a whole, receives funding and gets delivered.

160 The evaluation reviewed the resources and identified areas of work contained in Service Level Agreements between ESN and each Strategic Programme team during the 2016-2017 biennium (see Table 3 below). The largest proportion of funds to ESN was allocated to activities under SO4, the second largest to SO1, followed by SO3, SO5 and SO2.

- **Strategic Objective 1**: The Nutrition Strategy was explicitly formulated to directly contribute to the achievement of Strategic Objective 1, and many of ESN’s work areas naturally fit within SO1, devoted to policy support, data and coordination for food security and nutrition. At country level, the SO1 evaluation95 found that FAO’s presence in nutrition-specific coordination spaces, owing to limited human resources in FAO country offices, remained insufficient to promote food-based approaches to its full potential, but that the FIRST programme (managed by the SP1 team) provided significant support in nutrition mainstreaming and ought to be expanded beyond the current 33 countries.

- **Strategic Objective 2**: SO2 is devoted to sustainable management of natural resources in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Service Level Agreements from SO2 support the INFOODS network, the food composition databases and nutrition education. Coordination between SP2 and ESN needs to be reinvigorated to better mainstream nutrition within SO2. Currently, technical notes are being developed by SP2 to explore the interface between nutrition and various sectoral interventions. The Voluntary Guidelines for Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Policies, Programmes and National and Regional Plans of Action on Nutrition,96 endorsed in January 2015 by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, stress that including the wide range of varieties, cultivars and breeds of plants and animals, wild, neglected and underutilized species in agriculture programmes is key to addressing malnutrition in all its forms, and that territorial approaches provide good opportunities for this. However, including a wide variety of species into agricultural and nutrition extension services and development programmes requires better data, particularly about their food composition. At country level, projects tagged under SO2 tend to equate increased or more diverse agricultural production with increased consumption and enhanced dietary diversity. However, they rarely account for the fact that farmers might choose to sell the additional produce instead of consuming it (which is not necessarily negative, e.g. farming households whose nutritional needs are covered contribute to the food environment of their locale by marketing nutritious products). There is also much room for progress, e.g. in embedding

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94 See Outcome 6.5 of Objective 6 in the FAO’s Medium Term Plan for 2018-21: *Mainstreaming of nutrition in the Strategic Framework & Strengthening FAO’s contribution in the international nutrition architecture*.


nutrition education into agricultural extension services and Farmer Field Schools, using extension and Farmer Field Schools to promote diversification of food production and diets, and monitoring the results on diets and food environments.

- **Strategic Objective 3:** Collaboration between ESN and the Strategic Programme 3 team remains limited, surprisingly so given the thematic focus of SO3 (poverty reduction). At headquarters, the SO1-SO3 Joint Programme on Nutrition Sensitive Social Protection has framed the work between ESP Social Protection team and ESN, and has lead the development of an Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment (ISPA) tool to assess the contribution of social protection programmes to FSN outcomes, in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO).\(^97\) The tool was tested in Cambodia and West Bank and Gaza Strip through the FIRST programme and with financial and technical support from SP3. Work on school feeding is another area of collaboration. At country level, the many school meal projects implemented by FAO in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as in Africa illustrate the high potential of this “impact pathway” to nutrition. ESP has been working with the Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) team to develop effective approaches to impact assessment of home-grown school feeding programmes, with pilot studies underway in Ethiopia, Senegal and Zambia (GCP/GLO/775/ITA).

- **Strategic Objective 4:** Nutrition appears well integrated into Strategic Objective 4, including through nutrition-sensitive value chains, institutionalized procurement for school feeding, and targeted programmes like the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), expected to become a major fundraising tool to help FAO invest in the agricultural and food systems of SIDS, often in decline.\(^98\) Upcoming areas of work include food losses and waste, fortification, packaging and labelling, and FAO’s participation in the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) and the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL). Of note is also the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Nutrition (JEMNU) established in 2010 to provide scientific advice on nutrition to the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Due to lack of resources JEMNU was dormant until 2018, when it was activated to provide scientific advice to CCNFSDU.

- **Strategic Objective 5:** SO5 is devoted to resilience building in crisis-prone contexts. Specific achievements in nutrition mainstreaming include the development and the translation in several languages of a series of guidance materials to support FAO nutrition-sensitive resilience programming, including a guidance note on nutrition in protracted crises to support the implementation of the CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises. FAO country offices have shown a growing interest on nutrition materialized by increased request for technical support for nutrition-sensitive programming (e.g. Lebanon, Palestine, Syria) and the increased number of resilience programmes with a clear focus on nutrition, e.g. the European Union-funded programme on Resilience in Syria or the ongoing joint Rome-based agency programmes to strengthen the resilience of livelihoods in protracted crisis contexts implemented in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Somalia. The integration of nutritional indicators in early warning systems and food security analyses

\(^{97}\) [https://ispatools.org/](https://ispatools.org/)

is another promising area. In 2014, the standard IPC\textsuperscript{99} analysis was complemented with a comprehensive nutrition component, called the “IPC Acute Malnutrition Classification” (IPC AMN) that was applied in 12 countries so far.\textsuperscript{100} Numerous nutrition-sensitive projects have been implemented in crises contexts since the first innovative attempts in 2005-2010 in Afghanistan,\textsuperscript{101} geared at dietary diversification (homestead production packages and orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, micro-gardens) and nutrition education (nutrition-friendly cooking demonstrations) which frequently targets women. In Burundi for instance, FAO resilience projects have frequently included a package of vegetable seeds and nutritional education. However, these resilience interventions are rarely monitored and evaluated to determine the extent to which nutritional outcomes have been achieved.

**Table 3:** Service Level Agreements passed between SP teams and ESN (2016-2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objectives</th>
<th>Resources* in SLAs for ESN (USD)</th>
<th>Main areas of work covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SO1</td>
<td>4 754 192</td>
<td>Mainstreaming nutrition in food and agriculture policies, programmes and investment plans (including through the FIRST programme); further development of the MDD-W indicator and of food-based dietary guidelines; strengthening stakeholder coordination for food security and nutrition (e.g. through the SUN Movement and the CFS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO2</td>
<td>535 789</td>
<td>Diversification of food production through nutrition-sensitive agriculture, while respecting and managing the environment and promoting local biodiversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO3</td>
<td>1 117 192</td>
<td>Interventions specifically targeting nutritionally vulnerable groups (e.g. children, women of childbearing age and people affected by a disease), and the promotion of healthy diets through nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes, including school feeding and nutrition programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO4</td>
<td>4 840 841</td>
<td>Improving value chains efficiency so that they avail affordable, safe and nutritious food to all population groups, with minimal food and nutritional losses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO5</td>
<td>573 453</td>
<td>Integrating nutrition objectives in countries’ resilience plans; attention to nutrition in early warning systems and tools, such as the IPC acute malnutrition scale.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: Only assessed contributions channelled through the SP teams during 2016-2017. Staff costs represent approximately 90 percent of these resources.

\textsuperscript{99} The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of tools and methodologies developed by FAO to analyze food insecurity based on diverse, heterogenous datasets and indicators, and arrive – generally through a collaborative process involving Government, UN, NGOs and civil society – at a robust and consensual classification of the severity of food insecurity in various regions of a given country. The IPC has been deployed in many different settings and versions, including the acute and chronic IPC scales.

\textsuperscript{100} Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda.

\textsuperscript{101} During that period, FAO implemented a series of projects with strong nutrition components in food processing, kitchen and school gardening, nutrition education, poultry and dairy production: e.g. GCP/AFG/039/GER, GCP/AFG/047/GER, GCP/AFG/050/GER, GCP/AFG/053/GER, GCP/AFG/056/GER and UNJP/AFG/057/SPA. The Evaluation of FAO’s Role and Work in Nutrition (FAO/OED 2011) reviewed the Afghanistan portfolio in depth, noting that at the time, there were “few examples of nutrition-related projects that have benefited from extended funding other than in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Malawi.”
Regional Initiatives

161 The reviewed Strategic Framework also put in place a number of Regional Initiatives. Some of those provide opportunities to mainstream nutrition, for instance:

- The “Africa’s 2025 Zero Hunger Challenge” initiative has supported Member Countries in developing nutrition-sensitive National Agriculture Investment Plans as part of their commitment to CAADP.

- The Regional Initiative on “Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition in the Near East and North Africa” (RI-FSN) supports countries in addressing the multiple threats and risks to food insecurity and malnutrition in the region by focusing on four interrelated pillars: governance; food security information systems; prevention and risk mitigation measures; and preparedness and rapid response.

- The “Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative” supports the implementation of various plans and strategies for the eradication of hunger and malnutrition, notably the Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States 2025 (Plan SAN-CELAC, 2015) which includes school feeding programmes, family farming support, institutional food procurement and social protection programmes, and nutrition education initiatives.

- The subregional initiative on “Value Chains for Food Security and Nutrition in the Pacific Islands” started in 2014 and aimed at developing local value chains through providing price incentives for the consumption of nutritious, local foods, instead of imported processed foods known to contribute to NCDs. This Regional Initiative has now been incorporated into the “Interregional Initiative on Small Island Developing States”.

- The “Zero Hunger Challenge” initiative in Asia and the Pacific places a strong focus on neglected species and underutilized crops, appropriately so given that agriculture and diets are often rice-dominated in Asia, with an accepted need for agricultural diversification to make progress on dietary diversification.

Country Programmes

162 In 2015, new tools were introduced for project formulation, including Country Programming Framework Tool 4: Steps to mainstream nutrition in the CPF cycle. This guidance is brief and well-conceived, but insufficient to ensure systematic mainstreaming. The country office backstopping systems put in place by the other two Rome-based agencies (IFAD and WFP) are far more comprehensive and include a knowledge management system based on programme monitoring and evaluation; backstopping staff at headquarters; surge capacity, i.e. the capacity to send nutritionists to countries on short notice through partnership agreements with other organizations; as well as guidelines and trainings. As a result, the degree to which country programmes address nutrition and the quality of the nutrition-related context analysis in country programming frameworks vary a great deal from one country or region to the next.

163 In 2017, ESN reviewed 35 CPFs prepared since the new guidance was issued in 2015. It was found that 23 of them (66 percent) reflected nutrition in their priority areas, a satisfactory performance although some of the CPF deemed to have addressed nutrition did so in a superficial manner. 6 CPFs out of 35 (17 percent) used the term “nutrition-sensitive” at the level of outputs or indicators to measure the proposed outputs. Evidently, a few of the
countries where nutrition was not listed as a primary objective or output still included nutrition as an ancillary objective under other priority areas and outputs.

164 OED reviewed 161 annual reports from country offices for 2017. About half of them paid a “high” or “medium” level of attention to nutrition issues. Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean are ahead of other regions in terms of nutrition mainstreaming (Figure 8). This pattern reflects the fact that FAO has traditionally focussed on under-nutrition, and has only recently started to work on overweight and obesity, issues that are more problematic than undernutrition in the Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia.

**Figure 8:** Degree to which country office annual reports for 2017 addressed nutrition

![Figure 8: Degree to which country office annual reports for 2017 addressed nutrition](image)

**Technical Divisions**

165 ESN also collaborates directly with other technical divisions to promote nutrition mainstreaming, particularly in the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department (AG), the Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water Department (CB) and Economic and Social Development Department (ES). In multiple cases however, the work was found to be carried out by the concerned technical division with sparse collaboration from ESN.

- **Animal Production:** Animal products can form an irreplaceable source of micronutrients\(^\text{102}\) and protein, and the Work Programme for the Decade of Action includes the promotion of animal source foods as a potential area of work. However, livestock also consumes an estimated 36 percent of the calories produced by crops worldwide,\(^\text{103}\) and there are also health concerns associated with a high intake of saturated fat from animal foods. As a result, animal products are seen as both a measure of the nutritional quality of the diet in low-income countries, and as a health concern in high- and middle-income countries, where the growing consumption of animal products is correlated with increasing income levels.\(^\text{104}\) In order to mainstream nutrition in its work

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\(^{102}\) Meat in particular provides a relatively rich source of well-absorbed iron and also improves the absorption of iron from other foods; its amino acid composition complements that of many plant foods; and it is a concentrated source of B vitamins, including vitamin B12 which is absent from plant foods.

\(^{103}\) Redefining agricultural yields: from tonnes to people nourished per hectare, by Cassidy et al., Environmental Research Letter No 8, Institute on the Environment, University of Minnesota, May 2013.

\(^{104}\) The State of Food and Agriculture (2017): Leveraging Food Systems for Inclusive Rural Transformation.
on animal production, FAO would need to communicate these trade-offs more clearly,\textsuperscript{105} pointing out the potential of animal source foods to help reduce anaemia and highlighting more broadly the potential for animal source foods such as meat, eggs or milk to enhance school meal programmes. At country level however, numerous FAO nutrition-sensitive projects already promote poultry, eggs and milk production and commercialization, and a few knowledge products have been published on the topic,\textsuperscript{106} including a guidance note prepared by ESN, AGA and FIRST on livestock and nutrition.\textsuperscript{107}

- **Water**: Water is a nutrient in and by itself as well as a key food production factor, whose scarcity is increasing in some regions. Irrigation helps control for the seasonality of rainfed crops and thus may help reduce lean periods. Agriculture is also a major source of water pollution, from excess fertilizer, pesticides, animal faeces and other contaminants. The room for collaboration between ESN and Land and Water Division (CBL) is therefore quite wide. So far, a concept note has been developed on nutrition-sensitive water productivity, in collaboration with the Stockholm International Water Institute. The Near East would be an excellent place to start operationalizing some of these ideas, given that it is by far the most water-scarce region in the world.\textsuperscript{108}

- **Fisheries**: The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FI) currently has a Nutrition Officer, as there is much potential for mainstreaming. The nutritional benefits of fish and seafood are well-known and fish provides about 3 billion people with over 20 percent of their animal protein.\textsuperscript{109} ESN has worked with the Fisheries Department to publish the first edition of the INFOODS food composition database for fish and shellfish, providing nutrient values for 78 species of fish, crustacean and mollusc.\textsuperscript{110} FAO projects in the fisheries and aquaculture sector tend to emphasize production and commercialization aspects (e.g. food safety) rather than nutritional ones. However, the potential for integrating fish products into school meal programmes is being explored by FAO, e.g. in Angola, Cabo Verde, Guatemala, Panama and Peru. FAO has also hosted preliminary meetings of the Global Action Network on “Sustainable Food from the Oceans and Inland Waters for Food Security and Nutrition” led by Norway under the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, in July and October 2018.

- **Forestry**: The interface between forests and nutrition has yet to receive the attention it deserves, with a few exceptions. Forests offer important complementary food (e.g. bushmeat, mushrooms, wild honey, fruits and berries) as well as fuel wood, and are significant sources of fodder for livestock.\textsuperscript{111} Nowhere is this truer than in the Congo

\textsuperscript{105} E.g. the State of Food and Agriculture report for 2016 (State of Food and Agriculture 2016: Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security) stated that “rebalancing diets towards less animal-sourced foods would make an important contribution in this direction, with probably co-benefits for human health”, without mentioning cases where a higher consumption of animal-source foods would in fact be beneficial.


\textsuperscript{108} Seven Near Eastern countries had less than 200 m³ of freshwater resources per capita per year in 2000, while the regional average was estimated at 981 m³, below the water scarcity threshold considered to be 1,000 m³ per person per year; see World Bank, ‘Water Scarcity in the Middle East and North Africa’, Washington D.C., 2005.

\textsuperscript{109} Seafood as part of a healthy diet, by Anna Larney, Conference on Seafood and Health, September 2017, available at [https://www.forskningsradet.no/servlet/Satellite?cid=1254021220371&pagename=VedlegQPointer](https://www.forskningsradet.no/servlet/Satellite?cid=1254021220371&pagename=VedlegQPointer)


\textsuperscript{111} Committee on Forestry, Follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition, Rome 18-22 July 2016.
Basin, where the regional project “Enhancing the contribution of non-wood forest products to food security and nutrition”\textsuperscript{112} promoted dietary diversification and consumption of micronutrient rich foods, including local forest foods. The project aimed to enhance the livelihood and food security of forest-dependent households by developing small-scale enterprises valorising a number of wild species,\textsuperscript{113} and was implemented in Central African Republic, Republic of Congo and Gabon in collaboration with COMIFAC.

- **International trade:** ICN2 and the Decade of Action recognize that international trade and investment is an important channel through which nutrition outcomes can be obtained. A background paper on nutrition and trade prepared for the State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO) 2015-16\textsuperscript{114} identified four pathways through which trade can positively impact nutrition: i) stability of food supply and prices; ii) diversity of supply; iii) lower food prices; and iv) increased income. “Trade and investment for improved nutrition” has been identified as an Action Area by the Work Programme for the Decade of Action. Furthermore, three of the ICN2 recommendations pertain to international trade.\textsuperscript{115} Currently, the collaboration between ESN and Trade and Markets Division (EST) on trade and nutrition is limited to formulating technical notes,\textsuperscript{116} with no concrete steps to move beyond conceptualization. FAO could usefully enhance its participation in some of the World Trade Organization (WTO) committees, such as the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) committees, where questions pertaining to nutrition in trade governance are frequently raised.\textsuperscript{117}

- **Food safety:** The links between nutrition and food safety are self-evident. Related ICN2 recommendations pertain to food control systems, the exchange food safety information and the prudent use of antimicrobials in veterinary and human medicine. In spite of this clear overlap, there is still little programmatic work at the interface between food safety and nutrition in FAO.

\textsuperscript{112} GCP/RAF/441/GER - Renforcement de la sécurité alimentaire en Afrique centrale à travers la gestion durable des produits forestiers non ligneux. The project published Vivre et se nourrir de la forêt en Afrique centrale, FAO 2016 (available at \url{http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6399f.pdf}), a rich collection of lessons learned on non-wood forest products in Central Africa.

\textsuperscript{113} Notably *Irvingia gabonensis* (wild mango) and *Gnetum africanum*, a vine whose leaves are used in soups and stews throughout Central Africa.


\textsuperscript{115} Recommendations 15, 17 and 18.


\textsuperscript{117} About 100 notifications of nutrition regulations were made in these committees in 2016 and 2017, according to A/72/829: Implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), Report of the Secretary-General to the UN General Assembly, April 2018, available at \url{https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/document/ENG.pdf}. 

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5  Strategic positioning

5.1 Evolution since 2012

Evaluation Question 9: How consistently were the recommendations agreed to in the Management Response for the 2011 evaluation implemented? How has FAO’s position in the field of nutrition evolved since 2012 and what are the drivers? What was the follow-up to the 2014 ICN2 Conference and the Rome Declaration on Nutrition? Was the Nutrition Strategy disseminated inside and outside FAO at regional and country levels, and is it used to guide FAO’s intervention at country level? Are FAO Member States and partners supportive of the strategy and of a renewed focus on nutrition by the Organization? How is FAO’s technical guidance on nutrition-sensitive agriculture now perceived by key stakeholders?

Finding 24: Among the recommendations from the 2011 evaluation, those about the drafting of the Nutrition Strategy, the mainstreaming of nutrition into the FAO Strategic Framework and structural changes in the Nutrition Division were fully implemented. Those related to evidence building for food-based approaches and mainstreaming of nutrition in the field programme and policy work of the Organization have seen some reasonable (yet slow) progress. Insufficient progress was noted on recommendations pertaining to raising FAO’s engagement and visibility in nutrition-related networks.

Finding 25: Member Countries increasingly associate FAO with nutrition, but FAO does not always have the capacity to respond to their demands. In particular, the implementation of the ICN2 Framework for Action for Nutrition and the promotion of the Decade of Action on Nutrition require urgent attention.

166 Table 4 presents a summary of the findings of the present evaluation compared to the recommendations from the 2011 evaluation. Strategic pronouncements in favour of nutrition (Recommendations 1, 2 and 8) and structural changes in the Nutrition Division (Recommendation 9) were fully implemented. Recommendations related to evidence building for food-based approaches (Recommendations 3 and 4) and mainstreaming of nutrition in the field programme and policy work of the Organization have seen some reasonable (yet slow) progress, as explained in previous sections. Insufficient progress was noted on recommendations pertaining to raising FAO’s engagement and visibility in nutrition-related networks (Recommendation 14).

167 The two organizations have recently issued guidance material unpacking ICN2 for countries and suggesting a number of so-called ‘SMART commitments’.118 The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition offers an opportunity to rekindle this work and start prompting and tracking country commitments for nutrition in a more systematic manner.119 The Decade has also

119 Currently only three countries – Brazil, Ecuador and Italy – show up in the WHO website tracking ICN2/Decade commitments, at https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/commitments/summary
resulted in country-led “Action Networks”\textsuperscript{120} that could benefit from greater visibility and may also need technical support from FAO.

\textbf{Table 4:} Implementation of recommendations from the 2011 evaluation of FAO’s role and work in nutrition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Status (2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Senior Management in FAO must commit to a strong focus on nutrition across the Organization requisite to its mandate</td>
<td>Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A vision and strategy for FAO’s contribution to nutrition-sensitive agricultural development should now be drawn up and articulated reflecting FAO’s commitment to address all forms of malnutrition</td>
<td>Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Build the evidence and link food and agriculture to nutrition outcomes</td>
<td>Partially done (research published e.g. on impact of nutrition education; more need to match the evidence backing health-based approaches)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Strengthen nutrition analysis in statistics and information</td>
<td>Limited progress (slow uptake of MDD-W, slow progress in mainstreaming nutrition in databases e.g. FAOSTAT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mainstream nutrition into agriculture and food security interventions and prioritize focus countries</td>
<td>Partially done (no attempt to prioritize focus countries, but some country offices do quite well)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Integrate nutrition into policy work</td>
<td>Partially done (e.g. through FIRST, CAADP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Focus on food composition and related scientific advice</td>
<td>Not done (food composition was de-emphasized twice, in PWB 2014-15 and PWB 2016-17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mainstream nutrition into the Strategic Framework and planning and programming documents</td>
<td>Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The “nutrition” element of the current Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN) to disengage from food safety and Codex and have a clearly defined institutional home with a staff dedicated to a multi-sectoral service function</td>
<td>Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The technical composition of the new Nutrition team to be determined according to the priorities of the nutrition vision and strategy</td>
<td>Partially done (human resources are often inherited from the past, but some new profiles hired)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{120} For instance, Chile leads the Action Network for the Americas on Healthy Food Environments, Fiji has volunteered to lead an Action Network for Ending Childhood Obesity in the Pacific, and Norway leads the Action Network on Sustainable Food from the Oceans and Inland Waters for Food Security and Nutrition. See: COAG/2018/INF/6 - United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025: Opportunities for agriculture to contribute to healthy diets and improved nutrition, Committee on Agriculture Twenty-sixth Session, October 2018, available at: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/bodies/COAG_Sessions/COAG_26/COAG26_INF/MX408_INF_6/MX408_COAG_2018_INF_6_en.pdf
11. Posts for Nutrition Officers (separate from Food Safety Officers) to be established in regions and subregions where there are nutrition focus countries  

Partially done  
(some posts in regional offices not filled)

12. Given the trends of FAO’s core budget over the past biennia, Nutrition Officers at country level to be resourced through extra-budgetary support and therefore resources will have to be mobilized for that purpose  

Done

13. FAO needs to realign existing collaborative arrangements and develop strong multi-sectoral partnerships to deliver on its defined nutritional outcomes  

Partially done  
(alliances for policy support not forged; some multi-sectoral nutrition plans supported)

14. FAO should be constructively engaged in nutrition-related networks at all levels and its visibility in nutrition raised  

Limited progress  
(insufficient presence of FAO in SUN/REACH)

Finding 26: Overshadowed to some extent by the reviewed Strategic Framework approved soon after it, the Nutrition Strategy was not proactively disseminated within or outside FAO. Not many external counterparts are aware of its existence.

168 Overshadowed to some extent by the reviewed Strategic Framework approved in 2013, the 2012 Nutrition Strategy was not proactively disseminated within or outside FAO. With a few exceptions, such as the five regional symposiums held during 2017, during which the Strategy was shared with participants. Not many external counterparts are aware of its existence, and it is not well known within FAO. The Strategy drafters did not pay much attention to implementation issues, and the approach to mainstreaming was formalized only recently through the publication in September 2018 of the “Pillars of action and institutional arrangements” document. The first version of the reviewed Strategic Framework tucked nutrition under SO1 primarily, and it is only in 2016 that nutrition became a cross-cutting issue in the Strategic Framework.

Finding 27: FAO’s technical guidance on nutrition-sensitive agriculture is much appreciated by stakeholders. There is still a need to formalize to a greater extent the food systems approach, which is a wider concept than nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

As already argued, the absence of an accountability framework reduced the visibility and authority of the Strategy within FAO. It also made it difficult to report against organizational Outcome 6.5 in biennial Programme Implementation Reports. The absence of a tool such as the gender marker affixed to all new FAO projects was cited as another reason for the slow pace of nutrition mainstreaming in the field programme, and a constraint in terms of monitoring and backstopping the field programme. FAO’s technical guidance on nutrition-sensitive agriculture is perceived extremely favourably by stakeholders, particularly the key recommendations for improving nutrition through agriculture and food systems and the toolkit on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems. Nonetheless, the food systems approach is a wider concept than nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and still requires a clearer articulation. ESN is currently engaged in a cross-departmental effort to develop a ‘food systems’

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168 With a few exceptions, such as the five regional symposiums held during 2017, during which the Strategy was shared with participants.

121 FAO’s corporate approach to nutrition mainstreaming - Pillars of action and institutional arrangements, Internal version, ESN, September 2018.
systems framework’ which attempts to articulate how food system development contributes to all aspects of FAO’s mandate, given that improved nutrition is only one of a number of outcomes resulting from the development (or evolution) of food systems.

5.2 **Comparative advantages**

**Evaluation Question 10:** What are FAO’s areas of comparative advantage in this area? Is its role clear to other UN agencies, Member States and partners? Has FAO developed its capabilities and used its comparative advantages to a greater extent since the promulgation of the Strategy? Is FAO’s role and contribution to nutrition, particularly, its push for food systems approach, at global, regional and country levels visible and acknowledged?

**Finding 28:** FAO’s leadership for matters related to coordination, policy and technical guidance on food-based approaches and food systems to improve nutrition is widely recognized at the global level, but much weaker at country level, where its technical and policy capacities are often weak in nutrition and its convening power is sometimes described as weakening. This capacity gap is widely seen as the core problem FAO needs to solve in order to translate its Nutrition Strategy into sustained and visible action at country level.

Overall, FAO was found well positioned to define and advocate for improvements in all forms of malnutrition through integrated and food-based approaches, food systems and sustainable and healthy diets. It has had difficulties in occupying that space and defining clear priorities for engagement on food systems for nutrition, thus inviting puzzlement, frustration and also competition from other stakeholders. Its positioning is not always clear to certain UN agencies, which points to insufficient communication on simple and clear entry points to be used by FAO in this space. The European Union, FAO’s largest donor in nutrition, has expressed frustration with an agency that they see as insufficiently committed to its nutrition mandate.

It must be stressed again that food-based approaches to nutrition are completely different from health-based approaches. They call for different entry points and beneficiaries, different time frames, and different monitoring systems. To a degree it remains an uncharted technical domain, which is why the need is felt for a coherent conceptual framework.

FAO as a multilateral Organization has the comparative advantage of being impartial and neutral, and hence is best positioned to define and set international standards and norms and support their application at country level. In nutrition, the issue of neutrality also extends to the delicate question of the potential conflicts of interest involved in collaborating with private sector interests (food processors, food retail chains, etc.), something which is necessary to pursue any food systems approach.
**Figure 9:** Main comparative advantages (according to staff and external survey respondents)

173 FAO is present in a large number of countries. Through its governance arrangement and the large number of Member States, it can activate broad networks of high-level technical experts as well as decision makers. Through its technical work over the years, releasing important standards, norms, datasets and knowledge products, including recently on how to mainstream nutrition in agriculture investments, FAO has maintained over the years a solid reputation as a capacity holder for agricultural-related technical know-how. The reform of the Committee on World Food Security and its own work on nutrition and food systems, dutifully supported by FAO-ESN, has further amplified its influence.

174 Hence FAO’s leadership for matters around coordination and technical guidance on food-based approaches and food systems to improve nutrition is still widely recognized at the global level. However, its position is much weaker at country level, where its technical capacities are often weak in nutrition and its convening power is sometimes described as weakening. A large number of interlocutors and survey respondents identified this capacity gap as the core problem FAO needs to solve in order to translate its Nutrition Strategy into sustained and visible action at country level.

### 5.3 Partnerships

**Evaluation Question 11:** Has the network of partners FAO works with expanded over time since the inception of the Strategy (including governments, UN agencies, resource partners, civil society, private sector, academia, etc)? What have been FAO’s contributions to the UN Network for SUN and REACH? To the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition? To multi-stakeholder arrangements and partnership agreements with UN agencies that have a mandate in nutrition? How effectively did FAO promote food-based approaches to nutrition in a domain generally dominated by health concerns?

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123 The CFS open-ended working group on nutrition has provided guidelines to promote good nutrition and healthy diets through integrated approaches to sustainable food systems; the High Level Panel of Experts has worked on food systems; and the CFS intends to formulate Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems for Healthy Diets in the near future.
Finding 29: Strong partnerships were promoted and are coming out of the ICN2 International Conference and under the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, particularly with WHO. The relationship with other partners appears unchanged, and often perceived as insufficient. In particular, FAO’s contributions to multi-stakeholder coordination platforms on nutrition, notably SUN and REACH, remain insufficient at both the global and national levels to promote food-based approaches to nutrition. The institutional disconnect between Ministries of Agriculture and Ministries of Health and between the corresponding UN agencies is still present in many countries.

FAO has worked closely with WHO to organize ICN2, under the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, and in following up with the International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition, co-organized by FAO and WHO in December 2016 in Rome, as well as in the regional symposiums that followed. There is no strong evidence that the quality of the relationship with other partners has evolved, e.g. with the Rome-based agencies, resource partners and Member Nations. Resource partners and other UN agencies are often critical of what they perceived as an insufficient engagement of FAO in nutrition at country level. The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition demands closer cooperation with WFP, IFAD and UNICEF.

The intensity of FAO’s collaboration with the REACH initiative and the SUN Movement has decreased during the last biennium, at the same time as FAO was reinvesting in the UNSCN, perhaps because these coordination platforms are seen as rival rather than complementary. These global platforms grew out of organizations who possibly have to ensure their positions and funding. The international architecture for coordination around nutrition has grown to become duplicative and is in need of rationalization. Steps are being made in this direction. REACH has been recast as a country-level set of platforms in support on the UN SUN Network, and discussions are underway between UNSCN and the SUN Movement to harmonize the two platforms. The main strength of the SUN Movement is its strong country focus and the countries ownership and leadership, while UNSCN is essentially a global platform with a strong technical and policy coherence function.

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125 REACH is a country support mechanism for improving nutrition governance established in 2008 by FAO, UNICEF, WFP and WHO.

126 Launched in June 2010 at a meeting organized by the Mayor of Rome and the World Food Programme, the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement now unites 60 countries, three states in India and thousands of partners and donors from business, civil society, academia, United Nations agencies, parliaments and the media for a common mission: to eliminate all forms of malnutrition by 2030.


128 UNSCN itself has a long history of both collaboration and competition between its member UN agencies. See for instance: Global Leadership for Nutrition: The UN Standing Committee on Nutrition and its Contributions, Richard Longhurst, IDS, 2010.
177 FAO’s relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture remains an almost exclusive one in some countries, while in others FAO has started to engage with the Ministries of Health, Education or local Governments. The institutional disconnect between Ministries of Agriculture and Ministries of Health, and between the corresponding UN agencies, is still lamented by partners in many countries. There is a similar persistent disconnect between agriculture and health policies: health-focused nutrition policies tend to lack food security objectives, whilst most agriculture policies lack nutrition objectives. Even nutrition policies that are explicitly branded as multi-sectorial often pay lip service to non-health sectors. E.g. in Nepal, the Multi-Sector Nutrition Policy was primarily developed by UNICEF with minor inputs from FAO, and as a result the agriculture component of that policy is limited to the production of nutrient-dense foods. This finding suggests that partnerships will need to be much broader than with the traditional nutrition partners and ministries.

178 With a few exceptions such as in Bangladesh, FAO’s long-term presence in regions and countries has not yet translated into effective, trusting relationships being forged with change agents in other UN agencies and in national governments on the issue of nutrition. As pointed out by the SO1 evaluation, FAO country offices generally support coordination forums devoted to food security and/or agriculture, but are insufficiently present in nutrition coordination forums – such as those emanating from the SUN Movement – to promote food-based approaches and break down the health/food divide on nutrition. Most FAO country offices don’t have a trained nutritionist within their staff. A few Country Offices have been able to raise resources for nutrition through projects, and have hired nutritionists as part of these projects personnel, often consultants, notably in Africa and Mesoamerica. Such project staff can help their Country Office develop concept notes and project proposals, but they are normally not mandated to represent FAO in coordination forums.

Finding 30: Strong links have been tied with the academia for analytical work, or to help African universities develop their own nutrition courses (ENACT/ENAF curriculum). More guidance is required on the kind of relationship that FAO projects and staff should develop and maintain with private sector entities in the food systems approach.

179 The evaluation reviewed many cases of collaboration with the academia. Strong links have been tied with GLOPAN, with some CGIAR centres (e.g. IFPRI), and with a number of northern universities for the delivery of studies or other knowledge products. ESN should also be commended for having rolled out the ENACT/ENAF curriculum to help African universities establish their own nutrition courses. This programme deserves to be emulated in other regions and technical areas. The practice of relying on one-off, ad hoc training events may have made sense in a previous era when national universities and training institutes in developing countries were weaker than they are today, but it is now obsolete.

180 Collaborations with the private sector are recognized as an area of weakness but are growing, e.g. in the work on food losses and waste. The SO4 evaluation observed that in certain cases FAO managed to raise private sector’s awareness of nutritional losses through food chains. FAO and the Global Alliance for Improve Nutrition (GAIN) have started to work together on small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) and nutrition, in particular in Viet Nam.

129 There are a number of exceptions, including Mozambique and Zimbabwe, where FAO hires the REACH coordinator; or Burkina Faso, where FAO supported a Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping exercise; etc.
Country offices have asked for greater guidance in the kind of relationship that they should develop and maintain with private sector entities in order to usefully contribute on food systems for nutrition, while avoiding any perception of conflict of interest.

**Finding 31:** Regional economic communities and groups as well as regional parliamentary forums were found useful entry points for policy support and advocacy. Many partnerships were built at the regional level.

At the regional level, many partnerships were built with PAHO, CELAC and PARLATINO in Latin America; with CARICOM in the Caribbean; with the African Union, the African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) Champions Group hosted by the African Development Bank Group, NEPAD, CAADP and ECOWAS in Africa; and to a lesser degree with ASEAN and SAARC in Asia. In general, regional organizations and regional parliamentary fronts against hunger were found useful entry points for policy support and advocacy.

**Finding 32:** Relations with donors are an area for concern. The capacity of ESN to approach donors has reduced due to the greater access and visibility afforded to the Strategic Programme teams in resource mobilization, and a nutrition trust fund set-up by FAO after the ICN2 Conference was never promoted to donors and never accrued to.

The European Union is the largest contributor to FAO’s nutrition programmes (43 percent of all funding to nutrition-sensitive projects since 2010) and has expressed frustration about what they see as the slow pace of nutrition mainstreaming in FAO. USAID is injecting massive resources in food security and nutrition programmes through its Feed the Future Facility, but FAO has attracted only a very small portion of these resources (e.g. in Bangladesh).

A nutrition trust fund set-up by FAO after the ICN2 Conference was never promoted to donors and never accrued to. It is currently dormant. This incapacity to raise funds for FAO’s work on nutrition on a corporate level represents another missed opportunity, another missing piece in the ‘implementation puzzle’, and must have contributed to the slow pace of nutrition mainstreaming in the field programme.

The capacity of ESN to approach donors directly has reduced due to the greater access and visibility afforded to the Strategic Programme Teams in resource mobilization. The current model requires that the Resource Mobilization Division (TCR) and Strategic Programme teams (notably SP1) collaborate to raise resources against corporate goals, resources that they then allocate to technical divisions for specific activities. According to some, this model does not encourage collaboration; rather it invites competition.

This is also the case at the national level where some FAO country offices and representatives are doing much better than others, in part due to insufficient backstopping and support to country offices resource mobilization efforts and capacities.
5.4 Communication

Evaluation Question 12: How have communication and knowledge management efforts between the country, region and headquarters evolved to inform, propagate and institutionalize the food systems approach to nutrition?

Finding 33: ESN has promoted the food systems approach to nutrition through a variety of means and fora. Communication resources tend to be focused on global events, such as ICN2 or the International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition. However, INFOODS has grown a large geographical footprint and the teams working on nutrition education and to a certain extent market linkages and value chains have established effective communications through country-level fora.

High visibility events and platforms such as ICN2, the Decade of Action, the International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition, and the Regional Symposia that followed benefited from significant and effective support and resources from the Office for Corporate Communication (OCC), as a result of which these events were perceived amongst FAO staff and many external stakeholders to be successful in raising awareness of the place of nutrition within FAO’s areas of work.

Communication resources tend to be focused on global events, such as ICN2 or the International Symposia and other conferences. However, INFOODS has grown a large geographical footprint and the teams working on nutrition education and to a certain extent market linkages and value chains have established effective communications at country level.

ESN provided the evaluation team with a list of events (conferences, technical meetings capacity development workshops), either organized or participated in, some jointly organized with partners including WHO, WFP, countries at the field level, and ASEAN. ESN organized or participated in approximately 430 events from 2012 to 2017. The highest number of events attended to was in the last year on record, 2017, with 130 events (Figure 10). The largest number of events organized or participated in were located in Europe, due to ICN2 and some ICN2 follow-up events being concentrated there. This was followed in descending order by Africa, Latin America, the Near East, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Footnotes:
130 39 events were jointly organized with WHO, on nutrition risk assessments scientific advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (reaching more than 700 participants), ICN2 joint working group meetings ICN2 follow-up, the Decade of Action on Nutrition, the FAO/WHO GIFT webinar (with 86 participants), and the UN Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs.
131 Public procurement of food for school meals programmes in Ethiopia and Senegal.
132 For example, the ASEAN High Level Consultative Meeting on “Integrating Nutrition into ASEAN Food Security Framework and its Strategic Plan of action for Food Security” involved 100 participants, mostly senior officials from ASEAN sectoral bodies.
ESN and more broadly FAO have promoted the food systems approach to nutrition through a variety of means, such as national and international media, YouTube, Ag2Nut or the FSN network (see section 4.2.b on knowledge management) to communicate messages on nutrition. ESN has helped the Office for Corporate Communication (OCC) develop several online training modules and tools to increase the capacity of FAO staff to address nutrition, has held videoconferences to reach FAO Representatives, and frequently organizes information-sharing sessions with regional offices.

However, the evaluation concurs with the recent Audit of the Nutrition Strategy conclusion that “a systematic approach or corporate communications targeting stakeholders, determining the frequency, type and channel of communication has not yet been developed.” Knowledge-sharing between regional/country offices on country-level experiences is fairly limited, and often ad hoc.

Finding 34: A set of corporate messages around nutrition and food systems, couched in non-technical language, has yet to be arrived at. While avoiding any undue simplification, it is important to be able to speak to a non-technical audience in a precise and focussed manner, and translate technical concepts into something local decision makers can grasp and defend.

Perhaps more fundamentally, a set of crisp corporate messages around nutrition and food systems couched in layman’s terms – the “soundbites” or “elevator pitch” so to speak – has yet to be arrived at. For instance, the messaging on the place of animal source foods in the diet is a matter of some internal debate. The pathways from food systems to nutrition are at varying levels of clarity, and there is an absence of systematic messaging intended for a
segmented audience. These issues are complex and the range of possible interventions very wide, but while avoiding any undue simplification it is important to be able to speak to a non-technical audience, and translate technical concepts into something local decision makers can grasp and defend.

5.5 Leadership

Evaluation Question 13: Has FAO played effective leadership and strategically influenced the global, regional and country level agendas on how nutrition can be addressed through food systems? Has FAO created or seized opportunities to promote nutrition-sensitive food systems?

Finding 35: FAO is recognized as a leading and authoritative source of policy, programme and technical guidance linking agriculture and food systems to nutritional outcomes, but not yet as a change agent yielding global policy influence in food systems reform.

FAO is recognized as a leading and authoritative source of technical guidance linking agriculture and food systems to nutritional outcomes. Building upon ICN2 and the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, and having broadened the scope of its work towards ‘all forms of malnutrition’ including overweight and obesity, FAO has advocated for the potential of using food-based approaches to improve nutritional outcomes, and contributed to an increased political commitment and increased attention to evidence in this domain. Nutrition-sensitive agriculture and its approach of linking agriculture and nutrition are considered as powerful and the right direction to address malnutrition in all its forms. More recently, FAO supported GLOPAN\textsuperscript{134} in the development of the seminal document “Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21st century”.

However, so far the main achievements relate more to advocacy and sensitization than to actual delivery of tested approaches. Outside of Latin America and the Caribbean where FAO has made some interesting forays in the food systems agenda, FAO is not yet perceived as a change agent in nutrition or a significant actor in policy spaces about nutrition.

Finding 36: Within FAO, insufficient collaboration between ESN and some of the Strategic Programme teams has been a constraint for the rapid identification and adoption of innovative nutrition-sensitive approaches throughout the Organization.

Within FAO, nutrition has been mainstreamed into the Strategic Framework, and recognized as a cross-cutting issue since 2016, but the Nutrition Strategy itself was not explicitly operationalized, e.g. costed, funded, adapted to each of the regions and monitored. As already mentioned, this deprived ESN of a major tool to orient, mainstream and report on nutrition in FAO.

Insufficient collaboration between ESN and other technical divisions (including Agricultural Development Economics Division, ESA; Statistics Division, ESS; and Trade and Markets Division, EST) and with some of the Strategic Programme teams (e.g. SP2 on production, Farmer Field Schools and livestock, SP4 on the agenda on nutrition-sensitive food system) impedes the achievement of some quick wins (such as on statistics and indicators with ESS) as well as the search for innovative ways to embed nutrition in FAO’s programmes. There are

\textsuperscript{134} The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition is a body which promotes the role of agriculture and food systems in preventing malnutrition. (Note to Team: While the PIR mentions this as a success, GLOPAN’s report itself does not acknowledge FAO’s contribution).
no internal mandated coordination and collaboration forums on nutrition. A notable exception is the School Food and Nutrition Task Force, which seems to have constituted itself fairly organically.

To facilitate the mainstreaming of nutrition, ESN focal points have been designated for each Strategic Programme primarily to serve as a liaison for corporate monitoring and work planning, but the system is often seen as ineffective to foster active collaboration with the Strategic Programme teams. Within ESN, limited staff resources as well as limitations in skill sets required for the new area of involvements have made it difficult to prioritize collaboration with other technical divisions and Strategic Programme focal points. Work planning is described as both time-consuming and performed under short deadlines under the matrix management system, with a degree of “information asymmetry”.

The relationship between ESN and regional offices appears somewhat stronger, with regular interactions at the technical level. For instance, the internal and formal coordination and experiences-sharing meetings organized by RAF every two years since 2012 involving all nutrition staff and focal points, country representatives and other key Strategic Programme/Regional Initiatives staff were backed with strong technical support from ESN at headquarters.
6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Six years after the adoption of the Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition, FAO’s involvement in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and later food systems for nutrition has grown significantly and evolved qualitatively. The Organization has had a more visible presence in this domain and has brought to bear significant analytical strengths to advocate for food-based approaches to nutrition, such as its global, regional and national reach and access to the Committee on World Food Security and the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition, its long experience in the relevant technical sectors, and its network of relations with all relevant partner institutions.

Nutrition was introduced as a cross-cutting theme in the FAO Strategic Framework and has started to be mainstreamed in the work of all Strategic Programmes. Strikingly, the field programme has more than doubled since the promulgation of the Strategy, and has evolved towards more deliberate efforts to address all forms of malnutrition, including stunting or anaemia as well overweight and obesity, to mainstream nutrition in agriculture development plans, to promote stakeholder coordination, to support dietary diversification, or to target women, girls, infants and young children.

There also has been a surge in the production of knowledge products and in the number of events attended. The pathways from food systems to nutrition have been extensively explored and are increasingly well documented. Driven by the rapid increase of NCDs in countries associated with the double/triple burden of malnutrition, there is an increasing recognition among Member States that effective strategies to address malnutrition must go beyond nutrition-specific interventions and include modifying food environments, particularly the most obesogenic one.

FAO has the mandate and the global, regional and national reach required to lead the way in piloting food-based approaches to nutrition, including the access to the CFS and UNSCN. It can rely on significant strengths: a long experience in the relevant technical sectors, the right tools and indicators, highly motivated teams, and relations in general good standing with all relevant partner institutions including resource partners. Member Countries increasingly associate FAO with nutrition, and have formulated greater demand in this area of work.

There is now considerable global attention being paid to the need to advance food-based approaches in order to effectively tackle the global burden of malnutrition, inside and outside FAO. ICN2 was a seminal moment, which has started to shape FAO’s Nutrition Agenda. The adoption of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition by the United Nations General Assembly in April 2016, with its work programme co-lead by FAO and WHO, provides a strong platform for political engagement.

Conclusion 2. The Nutrition Strategy itself was not explicitly operationalized, e.g. costed, funded, adapted to each of the regions and monitored. It lacked an accountability framework, and soon came to be superseded by the reviewed Strategic Framework in the mindsets of FAO staff. However, the Strategic Framework did not immediately provide a robust work planning and reporting system for nutrition. This lack of a clear, enforced accountability framework on nutrition in FAO has deprived the Organization of a major tool to orient, mainstream and report on its efforts in this domain.
Superseded by the reviewed Strategic Framework, the Nutrition Strategy was not disseminated to regional and country offices. The reviewed Strategic Framework and its associated monitoring framework and reporting processes were expected to serve for the nutrition strategy as well. However, this does not seem to have worked. Very few of the Strategic Framework indicators pertain to nutrition. ESN has reviewed the output indicators and qualifiers of the corporate monitoring framework in preparation of the PWB 2018-19 but the adjustments that could be made were limited. ESN developed clear and rigorous protocols for monitoring the indicators for nutrition mainstreaming under Objective 6, Outcome 6.5 once nutrition was uplifted in the Strategic Framework as a cross-cutting theme to be mainstreamed in the work of all Strategic Objectives. However, reporting against those has been described as a challenge.

Over time, other documents and strategies have quite naturally come to guide FAO’s work in nutrition, such as the ICN2 outcome document or the Decade of Action work programme. However, these are global frameworks that do not easily translate into an operational plan for any particular organization, and therefore do not substitute for an FAO-wide framework on nutrition promotion and mainstreaming, with clear indicators and standards to help translate FAO Members’ goals into precise work planning requirements for specific units and offices.

More regular feedback on both the successes and challenges of promoting and mainstreaming nutrition in FAO would also have made the Strategy a “live document”, one that can be regularly updated to take stock of challenges, progress achieved as well as changes in context and policy.

**Conclusion 3. Results accruing to Member States are so far concentrated in policy and global advocacy. Less progress has been achieved in reforming the production or curation of data and evidence to support sustainable food-based approaches and nutrition-sensitive food system, and in strengthening regional and country level capacities in nutrition-sensitive approaches.**

At the global level, FAO demonstrated strong leadership in co-convening ICN2; in promoting the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025; and in hosting UNSCN at FAO headquarters, providing mutual benefits and access to a wide range of food system experts. ICN2 in particular shored up FAO’s visibility in nutrition, raised attention to food-based approaches among Member States, and had a demonstrated effect on the degree to which they prioritize nutrition in their policy and programmatic choices.

ICN2 was followed by the International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition, co-hosted by WHO and FAO in Rome in December 2016 and then the five regional nutrition symposia organized under the same theme in all five FAO regions in 2017. Each regional symposium targeted technical officers in relevant ministries as well as key policymakers, and focused on the nutritional challenges of the region and how a food-systems approach can address these. There is however much room for further progress in strengthening regional and national capacities in nutrition-sensitive approaches.

Significant policy work has taken place in Latin America on school meal programmes, food systems and obesity prevention, in Asia through the promotion of crop and diet diversity, and in Africa within the context of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and the Malabo Declaration, with promising effects.

Modest progress has been achieved in evidence building at country level, e.g. through the progressive integration of nutrition concerns in the suite of Integrated Phase Classification
tools. The Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women indicator is important to measure the impact of food-based approaches, although it has not yet been applied widely.

**Conclusion 4.** Generally speaking, current capacities and skill sets are insufficient to meet the growing demand and address the wide range of possible interventions in a sustainable food systems approach. At country level, FAO’s programmatic presence in nutrition remains highly variable and dependent on donor support. This capacity gap – only partially offset by additional capacity accrued to regional and subregional offices – is widely seen as the core problem FAO needs to solve in order to translate its Nutrition Strategy into sustained and visible action at country level.

Following ICN2, FAO has gradually embraced addressing malnutrition in all its forms and stressed the importance of adopting a food systems approach, which is broader than nutrition-sensitive agriculture. Areas for future work are broad and demanding, including *inter alia*: support to ICN2 implementation and to countries which organize themselves into Action Networks under the Decade of Action; the integration of nutrition education in extension services and Farmer Field Schools; protecting nutrition in times of crisis; the value of animal, fisheries and forestry source foods in promoting diversified diets; consumer information and nutrition education; school meal programmes; urban agriculture and urban-rural linkages; labour saving technologies in agriculture production; nutrition-sensitive social protection; and the interface with food safety.

Human resources and skill sets are insufficient to both meet this growing demand and to cope with the challenges of a relatively new area of work requiring new skills and practical experience, e.g. in inter-sectoral policy dialogue, planning and programming, and relations with the private sector.

The absence of a corporate resource mobilization instrument on nutrition is a major lacuna that has slowed the Organization’s ability to address the double/triple burden in a broad and sustained manner. As a result, FAO lacks resources to fund what essentially amounts to a whole new area of work, and ESN has had to absorb an increase in the scope of its work all the while losing some key staff resources.

Despite the increase in the number of nutrition staff in regional, subregional and country offices (often funded out of voluntary contributions), most decentralized offices remain under-equipped, resulting in insufficient attendance by senior FAO staff and representatives in dedicated country-level coordination platforms, and weak resource mobilization capacity and visibility in nutrition.

Just as nutrition challenges and organizational environments differ widely depending on regional and national contexts, similarly the capacities and priorities of FAO and its partners also vary considerably. This has resulted in highly variable actions and areas of engagement, determined not only by the capacity but also the commitment and dedication of the decentralized offices and their human resources. Hence, FAO’s approach to nutrition at the country level depends very much on individual capacities and understanding, rather than based on corporate strategic directions. As such, opportunities to mainstream nutrition across FAO’s field level operations are unevenly utilized.

**Conclusion 5.** The lack of corporate-wide approach to nutrition extends to monitoring and evaluation, which is not systematically pursued in FAO nutrition-sensitive programmes. As a consequence, FAO is not in a position to rigorously test its approaches to nutrition, identify unintended consequences, showcase its best contributions and advocate for food system approaches.
215 The monitoring systems in existence are the result of individual initiatives, and the data produced tends to lack quality and comparability. Even the usually quite thorough NSA guidelines initially lacked a section on improved monitoring and evaluation of nutrition-sensitive agricultural programmes.

216 As a consequence, while FAO has developed a good number of frameworks and related knowledge products on food-based approaches, these are not yet backed up with lessons-based information that would facilitate their successful operationalization at country level. This is true not only for FAO, but for agriculture investments across the board in other institutions, e.g. the World Bank and IFAD.

217 Generally speaking, health-based interventions are well-studied and initially appeared to represent ‘magic bullets’ towards improved nutrition. Food-based approaches are now widely seen as more sustainable, but they are also far more complex and more difficult to demonstrate scientifically, due to their long, socio-economic impact pathways. This places these approaches at a disadvantage in advocacy and resource mobilization compared to health-based approaches. Reversing this situation will require a dedicated effort to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of nutrition-sensitive projects, using *sui generis* methodologies adapted to food-based approaches rather than trying to emulate the indicators and methods of nutrition-specific interventions.

**Conclusion 6.** *FAO has been slow in defining its approach, priorities and communication regarding food systems and nutrition. It has yet to provide guidance to its country offices on this matter as well as on the related issue of how to engage the private sector, essential to any food systems approach, in a pragmatic yet principled manner at country level.*

218 This is a conclusion supported by the cross-Strategic Objective evaluation, which highlights challenges in defining and articulating food systems approaches in the theories of change under each of the Strategic Objectives.

219 FAO has set-up a technical task team involving all Strategic Programmes, relevant technical divisions including ESN and regional focal points to develop a food systems framework which attempts to articulate how food system development contributes to all aspects of FAO’s mandate. Strong leadership and clear mandates will be needed to roll out a coherent food systems approach across the Organization.

220 A set of corporate messages around nutrition and food systems and what FAO can do to help reform them, couched in simple, non-technical terms has yet to be arrived at. There have been significant efforts in this direction, notably the International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition organized by FAO and WHO in December 2016, which produced a document organizing 11 key messages around three sub-themes on supply-side measures, demand-side measures, and accountability, resilience and equity.

221 It is important to be able to speak to a non-nutritionist, non-technical audience, and translate technical concepts into something local decision makers and the private sector can grasp and defend. Reaching out to the private sector is key to any food systems approach, but this implies reputational risks for the Organization. An institutional protocol for guiding such engagements is available but quite detailed and precautionary, and better suited to dealing with a large international corporation with a legal office than for engaging productively with a farmer cooperative or a local supermarket chain in a developing country. Country offices would need more pragmatic guidelines from headquarters on how to work with national or local, small-scale and medium-scale food enterprises, private dealers and cooperatives, with
a level of standards to guard against conflict of interest and reputational risks adapted to country office capabilities and commensurate with the level of risk, which might arguably be lower when partnering with small-scale, local companies than when dealing with large international ones.

6.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. The Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition should be updated in order to take stock of ICN2, reflect the broadened focus on “all forms of malnutrition” including overweight and obesity, articulate the potential contribution of food systems to nutrition over and beyond nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and strengthen accountability towards Member States with a robust accountability framework.

222 The evaluated Strategy has been overtaken by events, and there is now a need to update, adjust to rising challenges and retool nutrition in FAO with a strong accountability framework. The new updated Strategy must take account of operational, staff and financial constraints, and strike a careful balance between continuity for key normative products and their necessary evolution.

223 The revised Strategy needs to take stock of ICN2, of the 2030 Agenda, of the Decade of Action on Nutrition, and of the broadened focus on “all forms of malnutrition” including overweight and obesity. It must clarify FAO’s nutrition role in achieving the SDGs, make unambiguous commitments by FAO at political, financial and technical levels towards improving its nutritional impact, and articulate in summary form the FAO nutrition-sensitive food systems approach. The latter should be further summarized in a small set of crisp messages that every FAO staff can easily memorize and quote about how to reform food systems for improved nutrition.

224 It would be desirable to link explicitly the updated Strategy with the Sustainable Development Goals, given that ICN2 and the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition are not always known at country level or perceived as relevant compared to the SDGs.

225 Regional chapters should be drafted in consultation with regional offices, as a way to fine tune the corporate focus and approaches to specific regional opportunities, challenges and priorities, get buy-in from the regional and subregional offices, and practically support the roll-out of the strategy to regions and countries. These could include sections on countries in special development contexts, such as the special case of Small Island Developing States, which tend to import a lot of their food and suffer from high overweight and obesity levels, and countries in protracted crises where malnutrition can quickly deteriorate for a large number of people.

226 Chapters could also be dedicated to each SO, to give strategic direction on mainstreaming nutrition into the Strategic Programme teams work plans and those of their contributing technical units.

227 Most importantly, the updated Strategy must include a robust section on implementation mechanisms, and an accountability framework i.e. a mandated periodic report to FAO’s membership against a set of minimum standards or indicators of success, thus giving ESN, which must lead this effort, a better capacity to stay abreast of and support nutrition mainstreaming within FAO.
**Recommendation 2.** ESN should strive to better maintain functions over time when key staff are moving to new positions, strengthen its collaboration with other units and divisions at headquarters, and lead the development of an organization-wide network of resource persons for nutrition-sensitive approaches in order to build internal capacity and further mainstream nutrition within the Organization.

228 The division should continue its progressive integration of work plans and deliverables. It is also important to build a common vision of the challenges ahead, and the formulation of an updated strategy may help in this regard. Acknowledging the efforts made so far in terms of weekly ESN Management Team Meetings and various technical seminars on relevant subjects (technical, but also on policy and programme formulation), more mutual learning, sharing of information and technical discussions within ESN would help make fuller use of the expertise available and the different skill sets within the team to better address the evolving demands on relatively new subjects. It would also help maintain both work satisfaction and quality of output.

229 ESN should strive to better maintain functions over time when key staff are moving to new positions. It must be recognized however that the division has had limited control over some of the general managerial and functioning constraints of the Organization as a whole, such as the long-centralized processes to fill vacant positions, and corporate mobility imperatives. For the latter, the silver lining is that FAO’s capacity in nutrition has seen a significant investment in recent years at the regional and subregional levels, since in the current decentralized model, technical support to country offices is the responsibility of regional and subregional offices. Headquarters units as well as regional and country offices also frequently hire nutrition consultants, e.g. as part of national or regional projects.

230 FAO’s nutrition capacity is now spread across the globe and the expertise and experience of this team needs to be harnessed in innovative ways. It is essential to create and maintain an organization-wide network for knowledge exchange on nutrition-sensitive approaches. FAO has started using information technology for distance learning and regular meetings in the field of nutrition, and this effort should be expanded to help teams in headquarters and the different regions learn from each other, including horizontal learning (from region to region).

231 Regional and subregional offices are no longer required to formally clear Terms of Reference and recruitment criteria with the ‘mother division’ at headquarters. Nevertheless, they should still keep ESN ‘in the loop’, i.e. strongly connected with regional nutrition-sensitive consultants and staff for knowledge management and training purposes, and as a way to promote coherence of approaches across the Organization.

232 There are opportunities to better mainstream nutrition and food system into the overall policy work of FAO. ESN’s policy work could benefit from stronger links with the Office of Assistant Director-General’s (ESD’s) Governance and Policy Group for ensuring alignments and synergies.

233 ESN should also strengthen its collaboration with Strategic Programme teams and with relevant technical divisions at headquarters, and thus support a more proactive integration of nutrition into FAO’s work. The idea of dedicated Strategic Objective focal points who can effectively support the integration of nutrition in their respective SOs may need to be revisited. A centralized approach with one or two staff entirely dedicated to nutrition mainstreaming for each SO might be more effective than the focal point system.
Recommendation 3. Keep on clarifying the main impact pathways from food systems to nutrition and clearly communicate FAO’s role and priorities in this domain. Building on the current effort to craft a food system framework, FAO should distil its vision of how to link agriculture and food systems to nutrition outcomes in simple, crisp “FAO talking points” for food-based approaches to nutrition. It would be desirable to keep this list reasonably concise to give FAO’s communication efforts greater focus, coherence, clarity and visibility.

Food-based approaches to nutrition are still poorly charted and understood and the potential contribution and priorities of FAO in this domain are often unfamiliar to decision makers. It is important to be clearer on the story line, the narrative used to advocate, convince and get the buy-in of ministers, policymakers, private operators and donors.

Building on the current effort to craft a food system framework, FAO should describe what it can do to help link agriculture and food systems to nutrition outcomes in very practice terms (e.g. how can a farm, a food processing unit or a food retailer become more nutrition-sensitive). This information should be summarized in simple, non-overly technical language, and broadly shared within FAO and beyond to serve as the “FAO talking points” for food-based approaches to nutrition. It should be included in the updated Nutrition Strategy as a way to make the strategy more persuasive and practical, as mentioned in Recommendation 1.

FAO has limited means of implementation. Therefore, it would be desirable to keep a reasonably short and focused list of impact pathways that FAO wishes to promote and communicate upon more systematically.

Recommendation 4. Improve coordination and collaboration with nutrition stakeholders, e.g. with the UN Network for SUN for greater country-level outreach and ICN2 follow-up, with UNSCN for global policy convergence and knowledge sharing, with GLOPAN for global advocacy and with universities and research centers to generate evidence for food-based approaches to nutrition. These efforts should continue to involve the FAO Director-General who has played an important role in forging new partnerships, in raising the profile of nutrition-related events as well as in general advocacy.

It is well recognized that making a sustainable difference on nutrition requires the collaboration and coordination of several sectors. This calls for an amplification and diversification of existing partnerships, e.g. with the private sector as already mentioned, with other UN agencies, or with the Ministries of Health. However, the coordination architecture in nutrition is complex and duplicative, and FAO country offices have limited means to participate in nutrition-specific coordination spaces. It is therefore recommended that FAO prioritize its contribution to the UN Network for SUN for country-level engagement, as befits a founding partner of this key initiative, in order to capitalize upon and contribute to its knowledge management tools and wide networks. Support to UNSCN should continue as it effectively facilitates coordination, policy convergence and knowledge sharing at the global level, as well as with GLOPAN on global advocacy.

The implementation of the ICN2 Framework for Action on Nutrition and the promotion of the Decade of Action on Nutrition require urgent attention. FAO should provide technical assistance to enhance and track country ‘SMART commitments’ for nutrition in a systematic manner, and most importantly, contribute to the implementation of these country commitments. The Decade has also resulted in country-led “Action Networks” that may need technical support.
Collaboration should be strengthened with universities and research centres (e.g. IFPRI) to generate evidence for food-based approaches to nutrition, starting with FAO nutrition projects themselves. To be in a better position to pilot, assess and evaluate its approaches to nutrition, identify unintended consequences, showcase its best contributions for upscaling and mobilize resources, FAO needs to develop a set of sound and feasible methodologies to assess the nutritional impact of nutrition-sensitive programmes, apply these methodologies systematically to large FAO nutrition-sensitive projects, and ensure that the best results are published in the scientific literature.

Regional organizations have proven promising entry points for FAO’s policy work and these partnerships should continue to be strengthened and leveraged for effective policy action on food and nutrition security at the national level.

There is a need to sustain over time the political commitment of the Organization towards this long-neglected part of its mandate. The involvement of FAO’s leadership has had a strong impact in forging new partnerships, in raising the profile of key nutrition-related events, as well as in general advocacy, and should continue as a way to help influence countries and donors at the highest political level.

Recommendation 5. ESN should maintain its current set of normative products, build upon its vast library knowledge products to support policy change and adopt a more bottom-up approach in knowledge production, as befits an increasingly decentralized technical assistance model.

The evaluation found that all the main technical areas and normative products of ESN remain relevant and useful. Some naturally deserve updates or modifications, and additional experience-based knowledge products are needed to support Member States and FAO decentralized offices, as follows:

- FAO should continue to collect information on dietary patterns to support the promotion of healthy and sustainable eating, including on the Global Individual Food Consumption Data Tool, but this platform needs to be more actively promoted in the academia and ought to be linked up with other similar platforms (e.g. that of Tufts University).

- The Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women indicator is important to measure the impact of food-based approaches. It is gaining popularity, although it has not yet been applied widely and requires further field level testing and promotion in partnership with the FAO Statistics Division (ESS). During the SDG era and inspired by the “leave no one behind” principle, FAO may also help develop and promote dietary diversity indexes applicable to the general population, irrespective of age or sex.

- The Food Composition Tables evolution towards covering more and more diverse food types including local, indigenous and wild foods is relevant for diet diversity, but cannot evidently be achieved with the meagre means of FAO alone, and ought to be designed as a broader endeavour with multiple partnerships, building on the strong INFOODS network at regional and national levels, while keeping FAO as custodian of the data in order to ensure its neutrality and free dissemination.

- Food Based Dietary Guidelines have been supported in many countries before and after 2011-12. An analysis of the existing pipeline and how the FBDG are used at regional and country levels would help identify future options.
- **Capacity development:** expand ENACT/ENAF beyond Africa, add a Spanish version of the current curriculum and develop more specialized curricula for universities who want to move beyond the basics of nutrition. It is also necessary to keep raising awareness of FAO technical staff and to build planning capacity of local governments. FAO could potentially partner with Ag2Nut on this. The UNSCN network is currently creating national Ag2Nut groups, and those so far created have universally valued curriculum development on agriculture-nutrition linkages.

- **The links between diets and poverty** is an area that requires further analysis and data, especially regarding how accessible and affordable nutritious food is for poor people. Issues of inequity and inequality are increasingly recognized as central to understand malnutrition. There is scope for significant health gains if a diet rich in vegetables, fruit, fish and quality vegetable oil could be more accessible to poor people.

- **Policy support:** building on Recommendation 3 which calls for communication on the impact pathways from food systems to nutrition, knowledge products specifically targeted at policy actors and that support FAO’s role and country efforts in the policy cycle on nutrition and food systems (from policy setting, to implementation and evaluation) should be prioritized, in collaboration with Strategic Programme1.

FAO and specifically ESN may wish to consider a more bottom-up knowledge management approach. The often-excellent knowledge products emanating from regional and country offices are rarely published globally and usually not translated into other languages, leading to a mass of knowledge that is never even properly disseminated within the Organization. Within an increasingly decentralized technical assistance model, this issue deserves correction from a knowledge management standpoint, but also as a source of motivation for field staff.

An emerging area of normative work is that of the integration of nutrition considerations in agricultural extension systems. FAO should build upon the few excellent documents it has already produced on this topic to develop and disseminate extension modules devoted to the production of diverse, nutrient-dense foods and complementary feeding advice. These modules could be used to promote nutrition education more systematically within FAO’s own Farmer Field Schools programmes as well as in national extension services.

**Recommendation 6. Develop tools to support more systematic nutrition mainstreaming in the FAO field programme:** a ‘nutrition marker’ to flag projects with a strong nutrition component; a series of nutrition country assessments progressively rolled out as part of the CPF preparation process; an expansion of current training and knowledge management platforms to all FAO staff and consultants; improved guidance on how to work with small- and medium-scale private sector entities; and a global financing instrument able to translate the visibility accrued to FAO through ICN2, the Decade of Action and the Zero Hunger Challenge into financial resources that the Organization can use to expand its normative and field-level work in nutrition-sensitive food systems.

Systematic nutrition mainstreaming in the field programme will not happen by chance. FAO country, regional and subregional offices need to be capacitated to explore potential for nutrition-sensitive programming, and tools should be developed to support them, as follows:

- **A simple nutrition marker** should be affixed to each and every FAO project at the design stage to flag projects with a strong nutrition component, which should be monitored and backstopped closely by ESN and regional offices. This tool would also facilitate
consolidated reporting on nutrition across all projects, country programmes and strategic programmes of the Organization, which is currently an area of weakness.

- **A series of nutrition country assessments:** taking stock of recent research results and past analytical work, including the Nutrition Country Papers produced by the FAO Investment Centre in Africa in the context of CAADP, the FIRST Facility country profiles drafted in 2016 and 2017, and the various monographs and datasets available, a series of country-level assessments should be developed and gradually rolled out to inform FAO’s own programmes at country level, linked in each country with the CPF preparation process as already the case for the Country Gender Assessments prescribed by the FAO Policy on Gender Equality. This will create opportunities to explore context-specific programmatic entry points in nutrition during the broad engagement of the country office with the Government, UN agencies, donors and other stakeholders that typically happens in the CPF preparation process.

- **Expand training opportunities and e-learning resources on nutrition and food system approaches,** promote them to FAORs, assistant FAORs, staff and consultants in country offices, irrespective of status, based on the actually perceived gaps at country level.

- **A system of exchange of lessons and best practices between countries and regions** would also be very useful, e.g. through a regular webinar showcasing best practices in nutrition or through a “nutrition award” giving visibility to the most proactive country offices.

- **Country offices need better guidance on how to approach and maintain relationships with small- and medium-scale private sector entities,** with provisions against conflict of interest that remain manageable for country offices and small-scale entrepreneurs, and commensurate with the level of risk. This is not an issue for ESN alone as it goes well beyond nutrition; therefore its resolution should involve Strategic Programme 4 and the Office for Partnerships and South-South Cooperation as well. The CFS and its Private Sector Mechanism and Civil Society Mechanism could be approached to explore options.

- **Last but not least, explore with interested donors ways to relaunch the post-ICN2 nutrition trust fund or an equivalent global financing instrument** (e.g. a ‘Zero Hunger’ fund) that could translate the visibility accrued to FAO through ICN2, the Decade of Action and the Zero Hunger Challenge into financial resources that the Organization can use to expand on its nutrition work in a more rapid, deliberate and systematic manner. Such a fund would allow FAO to better promote this agenda in countries and regions that are not priorities for resource partners, such as Latin America.

Among these proposed tools, the country nutrition assessments appear indispensable to the evaluation team. Numerous other organizations are producing nutrition country profiles, but these are mere datasheets of indicators. Such data showing who and where the malnourished are suffice for health-based approaches, but a food-based approach to malnutrition needs to be grounded in a firm qualitative understanding of the root causes of malnutrition in order to address them. These assessments would also usefully feed into the preparation process for new UNDAFs, and help equip FAO country offices with solid analytical arguments in favour of nutrition-sensitive approaches in their engagement with various coordination and governance forums at the national level.
Recommendation 7. At this time when FAO needs to address new challenges such as overweight and obesity, nutrition in crisis and conflicts, or sustainable food systems, it should strengthen its capacity to backstop country offices and help them and their national counterparts design nutrition-sensitive projects, programmes and policies, through a combination of more positions in regional, subregional and country offices, and a temporary surge capacity in new technical areas.

247 Most country offices are not well equipped technically to communicate on nutrition, engage new partners and develop a nutrition-sensitive pipeline of projects and programmes. FAO on the other hand has limited capacity to create new permanent technical positions. However, to ensure that emerging issues are addressed in a coherent manner and with a policy focus, a core technical coordination capacity is needed at headquarters and in regional and subregional offices. Country offices also need to become more “savvy” at engaging with both Member States and the donor community on nutrition-sensitive approaches.

248 The examples of regional and subregional offices and resilience hubs (e.g. in Southern Africa) who have hired new dedicated staff funded out of voluntary contributions (i.e. projects) to backstop country offices has been extremely positive in generating growth in nutrition-sensitive programming of good quality, and should be pursued further. When mobilizing resources for nutrition, FAO should prioritize strengthening the capacity of its regional/subregional offices and resilience hubs to backstop country offices in the design of nutrition-sensitive programmes, supervise monitoring and evaluation on food-based approaches and most importantly, build the capacity of national counterparts and particularly Ministries of Agriculture, who also need to develop their capacity in nutrition-sensitive policies, projects and programmes.

249 Resources permitting, FAO could also create corporate positions of national nutrition-sensitive officers in countries with a high burden of malnutrition, and these could backstop nearby countries.

250 Along the same lines, FAO could also envisage setting up a small, temporary surge capacity in nutrition-sensitive programming, able to backstop countries on short notice, i.e. prepare a country assessment, identify entry points and interested partners, and develop a few concept notes. This surge capacity could offer a mixed skill set of policy and programmatic experience in nutrition-sensitive approaches in various technical profiles over and beyond nutritionists, such as agronomists or private sector specialists. The mechanism would need to be funded out of voluntary contributions, and could be managed by the Investment Centre Division (TCI), or in partnership with the European Union Nutrition Advisory Services, or by a South-South cooperation programme in nutrition.
## 7 Appendices

### Appendix 1. List of people interviewed

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## Evaluation of the Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition

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<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Dia</td>
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<tr>
<td>75</td>
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<td>Siliprandi</td>
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# Evaluation of the Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Jin</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>Zimmerman</td>
<td>EST</td>
<td>Economist</td>
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</table>

**Other Organizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Nicolas</td>
<td>Bidault</td>
<td>REACH, SUN UN Network</td>
<td>Acting Global Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Francesco</td>
<td>Branca</td>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>Director of the Nutrition Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Isabel</td>
<td>De Le Pena</td>
<td>IFAD</td>
<td>Nutrition-sensitive agriculture and value chain specialist</td>
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## Evaluation of the Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<th>Organization/Division</th>
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<tr>
<td>105</td>
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<td>Egal</td>
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<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Shenggen</td>
<td>Fan</td>
<td>IFPRI</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<td>107</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>Garrett</td>
<td>Bioversity International</td>
<td>Senior Research Fellow (former member of the development team for the Strategy and Vision for FAO’s Work in Nutrition)</td>
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<td>108</td>
<td>Herwig</td>
<td>Hahn</td>
<td>GIZ</td>
<td>Rural Development Advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Mutinta</td>
<td>Hambayi</td>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>Chief Nutrition sensitive Investments</td>
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<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Herforth</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Independent Consultant, global food security and nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>Hochstetter</td>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>Director, Rome-based Agencies and Committee of on World Food Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Johanna</td>
<td>Jelensperger</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>FSN consultant, former FAO staff in SP1</td>
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<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>Irmgard</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Justus Liebig University Giessen</td>
<td>HealthyLAND Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>Roland</td>
<td>Kupka</td>
<td>Unicef</td>
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<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Lauren</td>
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<td>Director of Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>116</td>
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<td>Director of the Nutrition Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>Anne-Marie</td>
<td>Mayer</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>SO1 Evaluation Team (nutrition)</td>
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<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Nabarro</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Special Adviser to UN Secretary-General on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Climate Change (former Coordinator of Scale Up Nutrition Movement, 2010-15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>Nigel</td>
<td>Nicholson</td>
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<td>FSN consultant, Team Leader of the 2011 Evaluation of FAO’s role and work in nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Stineke</td>
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<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>GLOPAN</td>
<td>Professor, Director of the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition</td>
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<td>Gerda</td>
<td>Verburg</td>
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Appendix 2. Documents consulted


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World Bank. 2007. From agriculture to nutrition: Pathways, Synergies and Outcomes

## Appendix 3. Pathways from agriculture and food systems to nutrition identified in the literature (a non-exhaustive list)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Identified Pathways</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Intensification of agriculture</strong>: promotion of market orientation, mono-cropping, high input use and other intensification practices typically lead to greater income for producers, as well as more work in agriculture including waged labour, resulting in higher disposable income among producers. This in turn may result in improved nutrition if the concerned households and individuals prioritize good nutrition in their spending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Diversification of agriculture</strong> towards more nutrient-dense food types, crops and varieties (vegetables, fruits, fish and animal produces) through more diversified agricultural research and extension to promote a broader sets of species and varieties, prioritizing their nutritional value (includes biofortification).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Drudgery reduction</strong>: the intensification and diversification scenarios described above can also increase workload and reduce the amount of time available for parental care and breastfeeding, especially at peak labour seasons (and all year round in cases of male migration out of agriculture), and therefore lead to poor infant and child nutrition even in high agriculture production areas. Labour reduction technologies and social protection of workers in agriculture can help mitigate this effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Reduced seasonality</strong>: irrigation, national food reserves, community ‘cereal banks’, food preservation techniques, as well as access to inventory credit (‘warrantage’) are effective means to reduce the seasonal fluctuations in food production and prices and to shorten and/or mitigate lean periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Efficient value chains</strong>: improved processing, storage, preservation and handling of food throughout value chains reduces food losses and waste. Efficient value chains also better retain the nutritional value of food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Prevention of urban “food deserts”</strong>: promotion of urban and peri-urban agriculture, and of stronger urban-rural market linkages may allow for the reduction of “food deserts” (low-income urban areas where fruits and vegetables are difficult to source).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Nutrition-sensitive policies</strong>: agriculture and food policies can alter the availability, affordability and attractiveness of nutritious food on the market, e.g. through subsidies for specific commodities or inputs, by mandating fortification of certain foods, or by promoting clearer labelling or more transparent advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Nutrition education</strong> at school, in communities, at universities, etc., strengthens consumers’ understanding of the nutritious value of various food sources and preparations, makes consumers more likely to prioritize good nutrition in their spending choices (see pathway 1), and possibly makes them less inclined to follow harmful cultural norms and taboos about food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Women empowerment</strong> as caregivers, food producers and businesswomen increases their decision-making power and financial autonomy, and often results in a greater share of poor households’ income being spent on food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Healthy school meals</strong> (as well as public food procurements for hospitals, barracks, etc.): helping school meal programmes deliver more diverse and nutritious food purchased from nearby producers and rely less on processed food, so that school-aged children will be better nourished but also educated about diversified diets and less inclined to consumed highly processed food in the future, thus reducing the prevalence of child obesity and overweight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Food safety</strong>: strong food safety regulations, processes and practices ensure that safer food is available on markets and self-produced, thus reducing the risk of food-borne diseases, which can severely impact nutritional status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Forest and wildlife management</strong>: forests and wildlife offer important sources of income and complementary food, particularly at lean times and for indigenous people, and are often important sources of fodder for livestock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Nutrition-sensitive social protection</strong>: social protection programmes, if well-targeted, can be an effective means to reach marginalized, resource-poor and nutritionally vulnerable populations and prevent them from falling deeper into poverty and malnutrition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some Pathways from Agriculture and Food Systems to Nutrition

- **FOOD SAFETY**
  - Strengthened food safety regulations, and processes and practices
  - Safer food available on markets and self-produced
  - Reduced risk of food-borne diseases, including diarrheal

- **SCHOOL MEALS**
  - Schools purchase more diverse and nutritious food from nearby producers, less processed food
  - School-aged children better nourished at school, and less inclined to consuming highly processed food

- **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**
  - Women as caregivers, producers, businesswomen
  - Greater financial autonomy for women
  - Greater share of income spent on food in poor households

- **FOREST AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**
  - Forests and wildlife offer complementary food and fodder for livestock

- **SOCIAL PROTECTION**
  - Vulnerable groups may be prevented from falling deeper into poverty and malnutrition through food and cash assistance

- **FOOD AND TRADE POLICIES**
  - Agriculture, food and trade policies
  - Better labelling, marketing, advertising

- **NUTRITION EDUCATION**
  - Nutrition education at school, in communities, at universities etc.

- **POSSIBLE PATHWAYS**
  - Improved diets (more diverse and nutritious food purchased, grown, prepared and consumed by all households all year round)
  - Adequate energy and protein intake, less micro-nutrient deficiencies
  - Reduced prevalence of all forms of malnutrition
  - More diverse, nutritious and affordable food produced for self-consumption, traded and available on markets, including in low-income urban areas
  - Households and individuals prioritize good nutrition in their spending

- **MARGINALIZING FORCES**
  - Consumers better informed, more aware of nutritious value of various food sources and preparations, less inclined to follow harmful cultural norms about food

- **LABOR REDUCTION TECHNOLOGIES**
  - Labor reduction technologies, including for women engaged in agriculture
  - Mitigates drudgery; more time available for children care

- **FAMILY FARMING**
  - More equitable access to productive resources (land, water, finance, markets, extension) by poor farming households

- **EFFICIENT VALUE CHAINS**
  - Improved processing, storage and handling of food throughout value chains
  - Less food losses and waste; nutritional value of food better retained throughout value chains

- **URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES**
  - Promotion of urban and peri-urban agriculture, urban-rural linkages

- **INTENSIFICATION**
  - Mitigates drudgery; more time available for children care
  - Intensified food production; mono-cropping; better market inclusion of smallholders
  - More work in agriculture, incl. waged labor

- **SEASONALITY REDUCTION**
  - Less seasonal fluctuations of food production and prices; shorter/lesser lean periods
  - Less food losses and waste; nutritional value of food better retained throughout value chains

- **DIVERSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURE**
  - Diversification of agriculture towards more nutrient-dense crops and varieties (vegetables, fruits, fish and animal products)
  - Less seasonal fluctuations of food production and prices; shorter/lesser lean periods

- **BIOFORTIFICATION**
  - Ag. research and extension promote a broader sets of species and varieties, prioritizing their nutritional value

- **POLICIES**
  - Adequate energy and protein intake, less micro-nutrient deficiencies
  - Reduced prevalence of all forms of malnutrition

- **NUTRITION**
  - Adequate energy and protein intake, less micro-nutrient deficiencies
  - Reduced prevalence of all forms of malnutrition
  - Improved diets (more diverse and nutritious food purchased, grown, prepared and consumed by all households all year round)
  - Households and individuals prioritize good nutrition in their spending

- **SAFETY**
  - Safer food available on markets and self-produced
  - Reduced risk of food-borne diseases, including diarrheal

- **SAFETY**
  - Safer food available on markets and self-produced
  - Reduced risk of food-borne diseases, including diarrheal

- **HIGH QUALITY FOOD**
  - Adequate energy and protein intake, less micro-nutrient deficiencies
  - Reduced prevalence of all forms of malnutrition
  - Improved diets (more diverse and nutritious food purchased, grown, prepared and consumed by all households all year round)
  - Households and individuals prioritize good nutrition in their spending

- **REDUCED RISK**
  - Reduced risk of food-borne diseases, including diarrheal
# Appendix 4. Review of a sample of knowledge products on nutrition

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Clarity of purpose</th>
<th>Clarity of audience</th>
<th>Length, vocabulary</th>
<th>Clarity of content &amp; of practical guidance</th>
<th>Visual layout &amp; design</th>
<th>Resources &amp; annexes</th>
<th>Potential usefulness</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 - Flyer 1</td>
<td>General information dissemination</td>
<td>Does not state explicitly the purpose (N/A)</td>
<td>Does not state the target audience, but it comes out from the text (3)</td>
<td>Short, clear language, provide definitions (5)</td>
<td>Clearly presents the purpose of the Decade of Action on Nutrition (5)</td>
<td>Very good use of spaces, font types, boxes and other attention grabber resources (5)</td>
<td>Does not provide info/links to other resources to get more info on the topic (1)</td>
<td>Useful as quick / introductory information source (4)</td>
</tr>
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<td>General information dissemination</td>
<td>Does not state explicitly the purpose (N/A)</td>
<td>Does not state the target audience, but it comes out from the text (3)</td>
<td>Short, clear language, simple easy to understand (5)</td>
<td>Short and very clear guidance and definitions on SMART commitments (5)</td>
<td>Good use of spaces, fonts, titles, bullets (5)</td>
<td>Does not provide info/links to other resources to get more info on the topic (1)</td>
<td>Useful as general information on SMART commitments on the Decade of Action on Nutrition (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 - Flyer 3</td>
<td>General information dissemination</td>
<td>Does not state explicitly the purpose (N/A)</td>
<td>Does not state the target audience, but it comes out from the text (3)</td>
<td>Short, clear language, easy (5)</td>
<td>Addresses only very generic questions (3)</td>
<td>Good use of spaces, font types, titles, bullets (5)</td>
<td>Does not provide info/links to other resources to get more info on the topic (1)</td>
<td>Useful, but very general info, not addressing more concrete questions: i.e. how could countries get involved, which actions at country level? (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Plates, pyramids, planet - Developments in national healthy and sustainable dietary guidelines: a state of play assessment</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>Clearly states its purpose: the detailed analysis of sustainable FBDG (5)</td>
<td>Does not explicitly specify the target audience (2)</td>
<td>Long document, appropriate for policymakers but not for field staff and non-nutritionist (3)</td>
<td>Clear content (4)</td>
<td>Good use of illustrations, graphs, attention grabbing resources (4)</td>
<td>Good referencing to other resources and background documents (4)</td>
<td>Very useful as a state of the art document on FBDG. Provides concrete examples of good practices and failures. (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>FAO/INFOODS e-learning course on food composition</td>
<td>General information dissemination</td>
<td>Does not state its purpose, nor clear from the content (2) (General public, professionals/student working in nutrition)</td>
<td>Adequate length and language to the intended audience (4)</td>
<td>Clear messages on the importance of FCT and e-learning course (5)</td>
<td>Good, with highlights on key messages (4)</td>
<td>Reference to the links of e-learning courses are not too clear at the end (2)</td>
<td>Uses as dissemination material (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Clarity of purpose</td>
<td>Clarity of audience</td>
<td>Length, vocabulary</td>
<td>Clarity of content &amp; of practical guidance</td>
<td>Visual layout &amp; design</td>
<td>Resources &amp; annexes</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Guidelines for measuring household and individual dietary diversity</td>
<td>Assessment Guidelines</td>
<td>Purpose of the document is well presented, highlighting the changes in the revised version (5)</td>
<td>Does not explicitly specify the target audience (2)</td>
<td>Adequate length, simple and clear language given the potential target audience (4)</td>
<td>Clear guidance on measurement of DD indicators, practical examples on data collection and analysis. Clear and logical structure (4)</td>
<td>Two-page landscape layout is not appropriate to on screen reading. Good use of tables, illustrations, and boxes. Draw the attention. (3)</td>
<td>Include useful annexes to help users to calculate the DDS and to classify a great diversity of food items into food groups (4)</td>
<td>Useful in that it complements other existing guides on the same subject, with practical examples and a complete guide to classify food items into food groups. (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Regional Fact Sheet Closing the gender gap for better food and nutrition security</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>Adequate length and language to the intended audience (3)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>There is some logical structure in the content. However, key messages are hidden in the text (3)</td>
<td>Too text heavy. Not good use of attention grabbing resources (2)</td>
<td>No info/ links to any resources/annexes to get additional information on the topic (1)</td>
<td>Provides quick and very general information on the situation and FAO’s actions to close the gender gap for nutrition in Asia Pacific Region. Not necessarily fill any relevant knowledge gap (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Report of the Asia and the Pacific Regional High Level Consultation on Gender, Food Security and Nutrition: Ensuring the Other Half Equal Opportunities</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>It states the purpose of the consultation (4)</td>
<td>The report itself does not specify its intended audience, however this comes out from the purpose and the type of topics addressed (4)</td>
<td>Long document, technical language, would limit its use by field level technical staff who would be interested in the topic (3)</td>
<td>Content is presented in a logical sequence according to the consultation process agenda. However, key messages are not highlighted and remain hidden in the text. (4)</td>
<td>Too text heavy. No use of attention grabbing resources (2)</td>
<td>Relevant background documents annexed (4)</td>
<td>The report provides very rich information on actions that countries could take to address the gender dimension linked to FSN policies, legal and programmatic tools. Definitely it fills an important gap in the knowledge on the gender-nutrition linkage (5)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Livestock Nutrition Resilience in Sahel</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>Does not state what the purpose is. Apparently information (1)</td>
<td>It is not clear what is the target audience (1)</td>
<td>Adequate duration, but unclear messages (3)</td>
<td>Unclear what the key messages are: informing on the activity or advise on how to make livestock production more nutrition sensitive? (2)</td>
<td>Not useful images (mostly images of the meetings) (2)</td>
<td>Some reference to printed materials (3)</td>
<td>Unclear usefulness. Apparently it could serve most as project/activity dissemination material. But its content and design is inadequate as advocacy material for more nutrition sensitive livestock (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women - A guide to measurement</td>
<td>Assessment Guidelines</td>
<td>Clearly states the purpose of the document. (4)</td>
<td>Does not explicitly state on the audience, but there is no need to do so for this type of document. (4)</td>
<td>Simple, clear vocabulary given the target audience. Adequate length (4)</td>
<td>Very didactic, step by step. Provides clear guidance on many questions that may arise when applying the indicator. Includes practical examples (5)</td>
<td>Good use of bullets, boxes, figures and other attention drawing tools (4)</td>
<td>Very relevant annexes and links to additional resources are included (5)</td>
<td>A very good guideline that fill an important gap on tools to assess women’s diet. Very useful for researchers, assessment teams both in emergency and development settings. (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Synthesis of Guiding Principles on Agriculture Programming for Nutrition</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>The main purpose, explicitly stated provide complete list of guidance and principles to maximize nutrition impact of agriculture (5)</td>
<td>The main and secondary audience is clearly defined in the document (5). Policy makers, international community</td>
<td>Long document, technical wording, reduces the scope of the audience (3)</td>
<td>Comprehensive summary on existing guidance with abundant examples of best practices, lessons learned, etc. But, too many messages, overwhelming with no priority (3)</td>
<td>Text heavy, few use of attention drawing resources (2)</td>
<td>The document provides a very comprehensive list and links to resources on each guiding principle. Very useful (5)</td>
<td>It is an essential document that comprehensively introduces the guiding principles to optimize the nutrition impact of agricultural policies, strategies and actions. It is very relevant for policy makers, though not practical (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Improving diets and nutrition: food-based approaches</td>
<td>policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>States clearly its purpose, introducing very well the readers on the importance of food based approaches (5)</td>
<td>The book does not explicitly state its target audience, but it could be inferred from the text (3)</td>
<td>Technical language, limited use for field level staff, appropriate for researchers (3)</td>
<td>The book compiles a series of individual papers in a logical order. Clarity of the individual papers vary. (4)</td>
<td>Text heavy. Key messages hidden in the text. (3)</td>
<td>No info/links to additional resources (2)</td>
<td>Comprehensive state of the art book on food based approaches to address malnutrition. Useful for researchers, policy makers. (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Influencing food environments for healthy diets - Summary</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>The main purpose and the content is well summarized in the introduction (4)</td>
<td>Does not refer explicitly who is the target audience, but can be inferred from the text (policy makers) (3)</td>
<td>Quite technical vocabulary. Adequate length. (3)</td>
<td>The content is presented in a logical sequence. Clarity of the contents vary, language is not always clear (statements difficult to understand or translate into practice) (3)</td>
<td>Good use of boxes, lists and other resources. Key messages well summarized in boxes (4)</td>
<td>Provides info on additional resources (4)</td>
<td>Very relevant in terms of contributing to the general knowledge on what are food systems and nutrition environments, and the provision practical policy/programmatic recommendations on how to make food systems more enabling to nutrition (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Key recommendations for improving nutrition through agriculture and food systems</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>Does not state its purpose but does it need to do so?</td>
<td>No reference to the audience???</td>
<td>Very short, clear and simple language. Adequate also for field staff (5)</td>
<td>Very clear and straightforward guidance. (5)</td>
<td>Attention drawing layout. Key messages are clearly presented (5)</td>
<td>It would be useful to incorporate more info/links to additional guidance (3)</td>
<td>Very useful, particularly for agriculture sector policy makers. Practical summary of the guiding principles to make agriculture policies/programmes more nutrition sensitive (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Designing nutrition-sensitive agriculture investments. Checklist and guidance for programme formulation</td>
<td>Guidelines</td>
<td>Clearly states its purpose: &quot;to guide programme planners to apply the guiding principles in the design of nutrition-sensitive agriculture investments&quot;. Mentions what to expect from the guidance (5)</td>
<td>It states explicitly the target audience (5)</td>
<td>Adequate length and language, given the target audience. It could be appropriate for field level staff (5)</td>
<td>Clear and practical guidance, guides the reader to apply the key principles through the programme cycle based on key questions that need to be answered in each phase, providing practical tips. (5)</td>
<td>User friendly layout, with good use of attention catching resources: boxes, bullets, checklist, etc. (5)</td>
<td>For each section Provides a list of additional resources (5)</td>
<td>This document fills the need for a practical guidance on how to apply the guiding principles to make nutrition-sensitive agriculture programmes in actual programme design. Lacking more advise on monitoring and evaluation (4)</td>
</tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Compendium of nutrition-sensitive indicators in agriculture</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>It states clearly the purpose and limitations of the guidance provided (4)</td>
<td>Does not specify the target audience (2)</td>
<td>Adequate length, Technical language appropriate for the intended audience, not appropriate for field/technical staff (3)</td>
<td>Comprehensive list of indicators to assess nutrition outcomes of agriculture investments, including definitions, analytical frameworks and impact pathways for nutrition (4)</td>
<td>Adequate layout and design given the content of the document (4)</td>
<td>Provides a list of references to get more details on each indicator. It would be useful to provide hyperlinks for easy access (4)</td>
<td>Relevant in terms of listing most of the indicators that may be useful to assess nutrition related outcomes of agriculture programmes. But Does not provide detailed definitions or guidance on how to measure them. (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems in practice. Options for intervention</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>Clearly states its purpose (5)</td>
<td>The intended audience is well defined (5)</td>
<td>Adequate length and language assuming that target audience is high level policy makers and planners (4)</td>
<td>Comprehensive list of intervention options for nutrition sensitive food systems, presented in a clear and concise manner (4)</td>
<td>Attention drawing layout. Use of bullets, boxes and other resources to draw attention (4)</td>
<td>List and links to additional resources are well presented for each intervention area (5)</td>
<td>Useful in terms of addressing the need for practical advice and recommendations on concrete intervention options to ensure nutrition sensitive food systems. Practical guidance for planners. (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Toolkit on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems. Guidance for policy and programme planners</td>
<td>General information/dissemination</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A, but it could be general public</td>
<td>Adequate (4)</td>
<td>Simple and straightforward information (5)</td>
<td>Adequate layout for its purpose (4)</td>
<td>It includes links to the FAO tool kit materials (4)</td>
<td>Useful as a mean to inform on the existence of documents and resources on nutrition-sensitive food systems (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Basic concepts of Nutrition, Food Security and Livelihoods</td>
<td>education, learning</td>
<td>Very Clear learning objectives (5)</td>
<td>It does not explicitly specify the target audience but it would be general public (2)</td>
<td>Fine length, very simple language (5)</td>
<td>Very clear and simple language, practical, suitable for general public, students, professionals for other areas than nutrition (5)</td>
<td>Very good use of resources, examples, interactive exercises (5)</td>
<td>Links to abundant background materials (5)</td>
<td>Very good material, filling the gap for technically sound training on basic concepts of food security and nutrition. Good introductory course to FSN (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Improving Nutrition through Agriculture and Food Systems</td>
<td>education, learning</td>
<td>Very clear, learning objectives (5)</td>
<td>It states the target audience clearly (5)</td>
<td>A bit long, vocabulary adequate for the intended audience but not for general public (4)</td>
<td>Clear in general, but so many concepts at the same time (4)</td>
<td>Very good use of resources, interactive exercises (5)</td>
<td>Links to background materials, well (5)</td>
<td>Good training course, very relevant to improve knowledge on food systems and nutrition-agriculture links (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Integration of Nutrition in Agriculture Extension Services In Africa: A desk review of country case studies, pre-service and in-service training materials</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>The purpose of the review is stated in the document, (4)</td>
<td>The document does not explicit its audience (2)</td>
<td>A bit long, technical language but adequate given the most likely audience (3)</td>
<td>It is difficult to follow the sequence of the contents in the document. Key messages are not clearly presented. (3)</td>
<td>Text heavy, few use of figures, but no resources to highlight key messages (2)</td>
<td>List of references, and some links (3)</td>
<td>The document is relevant in terms of filling the gap on the existing knowledge about the integration of nutrition in agriculture extension. (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Guidelines for assessing nutrition-related knowledge, attitudes and practices</td>
<td>Assessment Guidelines</td>
<td>Clearly states its purpose (5)</td>
<td>It defines the target audience (4)</td>
<td>Adequate length, appropriate language for technical staff and also for field workers (5)</td>
<td>Clear step by step guide. Abundant in practical examples to help practitioners to design KAP surveys (5)</td>
<td>Attention grabbing layout, good use of resources such as boxes, illustrations, checklists, etc. (5)</td>
<td>Many reference provided. Standard questionnaires for different age groups of great value (5)</td>
<td>Given that guidance materials on assessing KAP is abundant, the value added of this tool lies in its contribution with standardized data collection tools to assess nutrition specific KAPs. (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Guide to conducting participatory cooking sessions to improve complementary feeding practices</td>
<td>education, learning</td>
<td>The purpose of the documents is clear in the introduction (5)</td>
<td>Its audience is well defined (5)</td>
<td>Adequate length, Simple vocabulary, adequate for community/field workers (5)</td>
<td>Clear step by step guide. Provides key messages in a simple language with practical and locally adapted examples (5)</td>
<td>User friendly layout, with good use of illustrations and other resources to draw the attention of the reader (5)</td>
<td>Includes recipes and links to additional resources (5)</td>
<td>Document that fills the gap for practical guidance and tools for nutrition education, adequate for community workers (5)</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>FAO kids advocate for pulses: Pulses contribute to food security</td>
<td>Basic knowledge dissemination</td>
<td>The purpose is not clear as many messages are delivered (2)</td>
<td>Children, presumably (3)</td>
<td>Short documents, but some phrases use technical terms that need definition. (3)</td>
<td>Too many messages, some of them formulated in academic way (3)</td>
<td>Heavy, not pleasant layout (2)</td>
<td>No links to additional resources (2)</td>
<td>The document is relevant and could be useful to pass knowledge to the public, but it includes too many aspects (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Pulses and Biodiversity</td>
<td>Basic knowledge dissemination</td>
<td>Does not state the purpose, but may not need to do as short document (2)</td>
<td>Unclear (1)</td>
<td>Appropriate length, language adequate for professional staff, not necessarily for general public (3)</td>
<td>Logical sequence, messages are clearly illustrated (5)</td>
<td>Adequate layout, very good use of illustrations (5)</td>
<td>Does not include links to additional resources (2)</td>
<td>Useful to disseminate knowledge on specific topic such as the importance of pulses (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Pulses and climate change</td>
<td>Basic knowledge dissemination</td>
<td>Idem (2)</td>
<td>Unclear (1)</td>
<td>Appropriate length, language adequate for professional staff, not for general public (3)</td>
<td>Logical sequence, messages are clearly illustrated (5)</td>
<td>Adequate layout, very good use of illustrations (5)</td>
<td>Does not include links to additional resources (2)</td>
<td>Useful to disseminate knowledge on specific topic such as the importance of pulses (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Health Benefits of Pulses</td>
<td>Basic knowledge dissemination</td>
<td>Idem (2)</td>
<td>Unclear (1)</td>
<td>Appropriate length, language adequate for professional staff, not for general public (3)</td>
<td>Logical sequence, messages are clearly illustrated (5)</td>
<td>Adequate layout, very good use of illustrations (5)</td>
<td>Does not include links to additional resources (2)</td>
<td>Useful to disseminate knowledge on specific topic such as the importance of pulses (5)</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Pulses Contribute to Food Security</td>
<td>Basic knowledge dissemination idem (2)</td>
<td>Unclear (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate length, language adequate for professional staff, not for general public (3)</td>
<td>Logical sequence, messages are clearly illustrated (5)</td>
<td>Adequate layout, very good use of illustrations (5)</td>
<td>Does not include links to additional resources (2)</td>
<td>Useful to disseminate knowledge on specific topic such as the importance of pulses (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Surprising facts about pulses you might not know</td>
<td>Basic knowledge dissemination idem (2)</td>
<td>General Public (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate length, adequate language for general public (5)</td>
<td>Clear content, light reading material (5)</td>
<td>Adequate layout, very good use of illustrations (5)</td>
<td>Does not include links to additional resources (2)</td>
<td>Useful as general knowledge dissemination material on specific topic such as pulses (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Nutritional benefits of pulses</td>
<td>Basic knowledge dissemination idem (2)</td>
<td>?' (general public??) but it is not stated (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adequate length, adequate vocabulary for general public (5)</td>
<td>Clear and simple, pass on clearly key messages (5)</td>
<td>Adequate layout, very good use of illustrations (5)</td>
<td>Does not include links to additional resources (2)</td>
<td>Useful, as knowledge source on nutrition issues for general public (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Pulses for food security and nutrition: How can their full potential be tapped?</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned Does not state the purpose (2) (information?)</td>
<td>Does not state the target audience. Apparently policy makers (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adequate length. Adequate vocabulary if the audience are policy makers (4)</td>
<td>Clear, logical sequence, messages are clearly presented (5)</td>
<td>Layout could be improved with better use of attention drawing resources (font sizes, boxes, etc.) (3)</td>
<td>Provide few links to addition material (3)</td>
<td>Useful as policy recommendations in brief on the promotion of pulses, for decision makers. (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>FAO kids - Nutritional benefits of pulses</td>
<td>Basic knowledge dissemination idem (2)</td>
<td>Does not state clearly the purpose (3) (information?, promotion?)</td>
<td>Does not need to state the target audience, it is for kids</td>
<td>A bit long, use of technical terms (3)</td>
<td>Too many messages at the same time, given the purpose and target audience. Parts are written in academic style (3)</td>
<td>Layout adequate?? (3)</td>
<td>No links to additional resources (2)</td>
<td>Useful as knowledge and information material on pulses for kids. Trying to reach an audience that is not usually targeted by scientific material (4)</td>
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</table>
## Evaluation of the Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Pulses: Nutritious seeds for a sustainable future</td>
<td>Basic knowledge dissemination</td>
<td>Does not state the purpose (2)</td>
<td>Target audience is not stated but could be a broad range from technical and professionals to general public (3)</td>
<td>A bit long, mostly colloquial language (4)</td>
<td>Logical sequence, abundant scientific information but written in simple and clear way. Too many messages though (4)</td>
<td>Plenty of pictures, attention catching resources (illustrations, boxes, etc.) (5)</td>
<td>Few Links to additional resources (3)</td>
<td>Useful as scientific and comprehensive information on pulses in one document (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Agroecology in Senegal: Kaydara school farm</td>
<td>General information/dissemination</td>
<td>Not very clear what is the purpose (3)</td>
<td>Not clear who is the audience (2)</td>
<td>Adequate length, but use of technical terms (3)</td>
<td>Somehow clear, information is presented in logical order, but use of technical terms without clear explanations (3)</td>
<td>Good (4)</td>
<td>N/A (no reference to any resources)</td>
<td>It is not very clear what the potential use of this video is. It could serve as project dissemination material (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>The School project</td>
<td>Basic knowledge/dissemination</td>
<td>The purpose is clear from the text (3)</td>
<td>Children (5)</td>
<td>Adequate, simple language (5)</td>
<td>Messages are passed very clearly. Only one message (5)</td>
<td>Good (4)</td>
<td>No reference to any resources (1)</td>
<td>Useful to pass on nutrition information to small kids (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Eating well for good health</td>
<td>Basic knowledge dissemination/education/learning</td>
<td>Very clearly states the purpose (to help people improve their everyday skills in making good food choices, preparing healthy meals, protecting the quality and safety and establishing healthy lifestyles (5)</td>
<td>Very clearly states the audience (middle and secondary school level, teachers, students, individuals outside the classroom) (5)</td>
<td>Generally clear vocabulary, given the target audience, but some parts tend to be too academic, Too long (3)</td>
<td>Divided in lessons each with introductory reading (usually clear) and suggested learning activities following a logical sequence. Some contents unsuitable for the audience (i.e. % of fats in a balance diet by age group is for nutritionists) (4)</td>
<td>Visual layout is user friendly. Good Use of attention catching resources (4)</td>
<td>Fact sheets with summary information on each topic. (4)</td>
<td>It is to address the lack of good information on healthy diets and eating habits. However focused mostly on undernutrition. Too heavy as self-learning material, lacking more advice on how to adapt diets to each context. Tend to prescribe a typical urban high status diet (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Clarity of purpose</td>
<td>Clarity of audience</td>
<td>Length, vocabulary</td>
<td>Clarity of content &amp; of practical guidance</td>
<td>Visual layout &amp; design</td>
<td>Resources &amp; annexes</td>
<td>Potential usefulness</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Study to Identify and Analyze Country-Level Experiences in Strengthening Food and Nutrition Education within the Framework of School Food and Nutrition Programmes</td>
<td>Policy, strategy, lessons learned</td>
<td>It states the purpose of the study (identify best practices of nutrition education at schools) (5)</td>
<td>Does not state the target audience. Apparently policy makers (2)</td>
<td>Brief document adequate for high level decision makers, clear language (5)</td>
<td>Contents are presented in a straightforward manner. Logic sequence. Clear messages. Brief (5)</td>
<td>User friendly layout. (4)</td>
<td>No links to additional resources (2)</td>
<td>Useful and very relevant as documenting lessons learned, best practices based on field / real experiences on nutrition education in schools. Practical advice. (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8 List of Annexes


Annex 1. Terms of Reference