**Call for lessons and good practices on investments for healthy food systems**

**Template for submissions**

**(Approximately 1000 words in total)**

**Please use this [submission form](http://bit.ly/2nAitb1" \t "_blank) to share your examples and experiences on investments promoting healthy food systems for improved nutrition.  For the necessary background and guidance, please refer to the topic note:** [www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/open-calls/investments\_healthy\_food\_systems](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/open-calls/investments_healthy_food_systems)

**You can upload the completed form to the [FSN Fourm](http://bit.ly/2p1dvUw" \t "_blank)** [www.fao.org/fsnforum](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum) **or send it via email to** [fsn-moderator@fao.org](mailto:fsn-moderator@fao.org)**.**

**Proponent**

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| **IFOAM - Organics International**  **TITLE: Nutrition in Mountain Agro-Ecosystems (NMA) project** |

**Date/Timeframe and location**

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| **2015 – 2018**  **Peru/Ethiopia/Kyrgyzstan/Pakistan/Nepal** |

**Main responsible entity**

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| **IFOAM - Organics International with FIBL and HELVETAS**  **donor: Swiss Development Cooperation** |

**Nutrition context**

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| The situation of the food and nutrition situation varies among NMA countries. Ethiopia and Nepal have more problems with food insecurity, ranking lower on food affordability, availability, quality and having higher percentage of undernutrition. Pakistan has a relative better food security situation, but the double burden of under and overweight. Peru has again a higher ranking of food security, and problems with overweight. Food security ranks are not available for Kyrgyzstan, but the nutrition statistics make the country comparable with Peru. Important: These country statistics don’t reflect regional differences within each country, which strongly differ from country averages!  The rise of obesity in all NMA countries and the persistent undernutrition places a great emphasis on the centrality of food systems and consumption habits as drivers for favorable nutrition outcomes. Yet, the design of sound food systems and efforts to change eating habits must respond to the different contexts. For instance, there are especially important differences in regard to the nutritional situation between rural and urban areas, but also between men, women and children within individual households.  The data from the Global Nutrition Report 2016 (GNR-2016) has the latest and the broadest selection of progress indicators of malnutrition, including assessments against Global Targets 2025 which are six targets adopted by the WHO’s member states at the World Health Assembly (WHA) to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition. The monitoring all the countries committed to is lacking in many cases including in the NMA countries, the latest data are sometimes 4-5 years old. However, in the longer run, these indicators and assessments, including those on underlying determinants which are key to understand how nutrition-sensitive a country’s agriculture is, can serve as acceptable reference points to measure progress in the project countries.  According to the report (GNR-2016), Nepal is off track for 3 out of 5 Global WHA[[1]](#footnote-1) targets including under-5 wasting, with under-5 stunting being on course. For most of these characteristics, the latest data only come from a survey done in 2011. Only 24% of children meet a minimally acceptable diet. The undernourishment rate is ca. 8% and there are ca. 450g of fruits and vegetables available on a daily basis. However, the available calories from the non-staples are only around 31%. No surveys have been done on these for the last 4-5 years besides FAOSTAT collecting data yearly on undernourishment.  Pakistan is off course for 4 out of 5 Global WHA targets, with only under-5 overweight being on course, at risk. The rate of undernourishment is fairly high with 22%, and the daily amount of fruits and vegetables available is quite low with something above 160g. The ratio of the calories coming from non-staples is around 50%, but data are missing on the last 2 factors for the last 3-4 years.  Kyrgyzstan’s performance is varying as regards the 5 global WHA targets. It is on course in terms of under-5 stunting and wasting, but off course regarding under-5 overweight, anemia of women in reproductive age and exclusive breastfeeding. These evaluations are all based on data coming from 2014 surveys. 6% of the people were undernourished in 2015. According to 5-6 year-old surveys, 46% of available calories come from non-staple food and ca. 490g of fruits and vegetables are available per day, unfortunately there is no more recent data on these underlying determinants which are relevant for the NMA project.  In Ethiopia the household food insecurity, hunger and undernutrition are critical issues; the poor nutritional status of women and children has been a consistent problem. Undernutrition is an underlying cause of 53% of infant and child deaths. Ethiopia is off course as regards all the global WHA targets except under-5 overweight. Lack of dietary diversity and micronutrient-dense food consumption, and problematic child feeding practices contribute to the high rates of child undernutrition. The undernourishment rate is 35%, it is the highest of the 5 NMA target countries. Only 25% of the calories come from non-staple food and the amount of fruits and vegetable available daily is very low ca. (ca. 70g).  According to GNR-2016, Peru is on course as regards under-5 stunting and wasting with stunting still being around 17-18%, but off course for other 3 global WHA targets on under-5 overweight, anemia in women of reproductive age and exclusive breastfeeding. Undernourishment is at 8%, the availability of fruits and vegetables and the calories coming from non-staples show sufficient amounts which of course vary by region. |

**Key characteristics of the food system(s) considered**

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| For many developing countries, the following is true – in general:  • People from urban areas with above average incomes tend to eat too much, and become obese. They often eat too much processed food (high in sugar, fat and calories) and too few fruits and vegetables.  • Self-subsistence farmers in rural areas tend to have too much staple food based diet (rice, maize, root crops) and consume therefore too little other foods that contain essential nutrients (animal products and fruit and vegetables). They often develop micro-nutrient deficiencies (e.g. anaemia) which are not always visible but reduce resistance to diseases. Most affected are pregnant and lactating women and small children.  • Small children (below 5 years) often do not get the right diet, e.g. they get too much watery foods (porridge, soup), which does not supply them adequately with calories and in regard to different micro nutrients. Consequently, they suffer from different types of malnutrition and their consequences (e.g. reduced brain and body development, reduced resistance to diseases). |

**Key characteristics of the investment made**

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| The project objective is to contribute to improved access to sufficient nutritious food for rural communities in mountain regions through a network of actors facilitating innovation and diversification of proven agro-ecological and other nutrition sensitive practices.  It promotes:  • Agro-ecological practices  • Processing and minimization of post-harvest loss  • Access to markets  • Dietary diversity  The project developed a social and knowledge platform for Rural Service Providers. The platform builds ownership and bridges the Rural Service Providers from mountain areas around the globe.  • It provides online and face-to-face facilitation and coaching of Rural Service Providers in local projects’ implementation. Dozens of micro projects are funded and supported.  • It includes national knowledge sharing with decision makers and global advocacy and knowledge sharing.  The ultimate goal is to improve dietary diversity through diversification of sustainable agriculture and processing. Dietary diversity is measured at the beginning and at the end of the project using the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (age: 16-49) methodology for the households involved.  For more information please visit: [http://www.ifoam.bio/en/nutrition-mountain-agro-ecosystems and maan.ifoam.bio](http://www.ifoam.bio/en/nutrition-mountain-agro-ecosystems%20and%20maan.ifoam.bio) |

**Key actors and stakeholders involved (including through south-south/triangular exchanges, if any)**

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| National implementing agencies are: Helvetas in Nepal, Helvetas Intercooperation in Pakistan, BioService in Kyrgyzstan, Institute for Sustainable Development in Ethiopia and IFOAM Latin America Office in Peru.  Implementers of the micro-interventions are the Rural Service Providers in the 5 countries. The idea is to involve a wide range of local stakeholders so that the most successful interventions can be copied and scaled up.  National and global level advocacy targets national and UN policy makers in the five countries and other mountainous areas. |

**Key changes (intended and unintended) as a result of the investment/s**

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| Most of the changes (outcomes) are expected towards the end of the project (in 1 year). Diversification of diets is already seen in some of the project areas through school gardens in Pakistan or the establishment of drying facilities in Nepal. A public discourse started in Ethiopia has contributed to moving away from the staple-food-only diet. Women are empowered by additional income generated by processing and selling some of their produce, which they use to buy healthy and nutritious food for the family. Awareness raising and knowledge exchange activities play a critical role in changing people’s diets in these rural areas. |

**Challenges faced**

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| Instead of eating it, many families sell their nutritious food as the main source of income. Sufficient policies and plans that promote and scale up nutrition in mountain agro-ecological farming systems are still lacking and do not take into account the interests of smallholders, especially women. In each country, several ministries are involved and do not always coordinate on vision and goals, let alone on practical interventions. In some countries separate funding streams exist for agriculture and nutrition.  National implementing agencies are: Helvetas in Nepal, Interccoperation in Pakistan, BioService in Kyrgyzstan, Institute for Sustainable Development in Ethiopia and IFOAM Latin America Office in Peru.  The connectivity and internet access in rural areas still remain a challenge in most of the countries and local people are also not used to the digital world.  In Ethiopia the project implementation became more difficult and even stopped due to severe draught that led to the loss of cattle in the farming communities. |

**Lessons/Key messages**

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| • Good agro-ecological practices improve resilience, productivity and sustainability of farms and diversify food availability.  • Processing and minimization of post-harvest loss reduce seasonal shortages and improve productivity and nutrition all year round.  • Improved access to markets increase monetary income in order to complement the family diets.  • Dietary diversity is a precondition for a healthy diet that covers the needs of children, women and men and prevents hidden hunger  • Diversified ecological mountain agriculture and consumption helps implement national strategies.  • Ecological diversification of farms helps increase farm income, improve family health, protect natural resources, and increase resilience to market fluctuations and climate change.  • The production and sale of a variety of nutritious products provides business opportunities.  • Revival of traditional food strengthens local culture and provides opportunities for marketing and tourism. |

1. World Health Assembly ist he decision making body of WHO [↑](#footnote-ref-1)