



A guidance note on nutrition

for United Nations country teams,
their government counterparts and
other stakeholders

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Key messages

- 1** Good nutrition is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with 12 of the 17 SDGs highly related to nutrition. This creates opportunities for nutrition mainstreaming in both UN and national development plans for achieving better results across the SDGs.
- 2** Resident Coordinators and United Nations country team (UNCT) members are encouraged to work closely with their government counterparts and other stakeholders to consider the integration of nutrition into their United Nations Cooperation Frameworks (both United Nations Development Assistance Framework [UNDAF] and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework [UNSDCF] models) per country nutrition priorities using the following guidance.
- 3** The UNSDCF should support the mainstreaming of nutrition into national development plans and enable the better streamlining and integration of relevant nutrition-related activities to strengthen agriculture, food, health, education and social protection systems, among other things.
- 4** Nutrition considerations should be embedded into ongoing country analytical work related to these sectors and generate new information on nutrition-development linkages. Here, the key is leveraging analytical tools and processes by relevant United Nations agencies.
- 5** Commitments made during the 2021 Tokyo Nutrition for Growth (N4G) summit and United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) offer opportunities to identify and track progress on improving nutrition through a systems approach, focused on integrating and aligning nutrition into and across the sectors mentioned in point 2.
- 6** As countries often face resource constraints, it is crucial to highlight to policy- and decision-makers the key role of nutrition in sustainable development, the social, health and economic benefits of investing in nutrition and the costs of inaction.
- 7** Efforts to improve nutrition with a priority focus on the most affected and marginalized population groups should be assessed against national nutrition targets, as well as World Health Assembly (WHA) global nutrition targets and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets and indicators.
- 8** During UNSDCF implementation, periodic nutrition assessments (such as desk reviews, field visits, UN-Nutrition inventories and nutrition stakeholder and action mapping exercises) will help to review expected improvements in access to planned nutrition-related actions, as well as to identify any new challenges due to emergencies, disasters or other unforeseen circumstances.

1 Why including nutrition in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

Malnutrition, in all its forms, includes undernutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight), micronutrient deficiencies and issues of overweight and obesity (WHO, 2021). Multiple direct and underlying factors cause malnutrition, and many forms of malnutrition can coexist in the same country, family or individual, resulting in multiple burdens of malnutrition. The human and financial costs of not addressing malnutrition cannot be understated. Undernutrition, for example, remains the underlying cause of 45 percent of deaths in children under five years of age (WHO, 2020). Investments in nutrition are among the most cost-effective interventions and remain fundamental to building human capital and prosperous societies. Estimates from the 2014 Global Nutrition Report (IFPRI, 2014), for example, suggest that every USD 1 invested in improving nutrition generates an average return of USD 16, though this value varies widely from country to country and region to region.

Unfortunately, when the COVID-19 pandemic happened, efforts to address hunger and malnutrition were not on track to meet the SDGs by 2030 (FAO, 2021). In 2020, moderate and severe food insecurity levels equalled those of the previous five years combined (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2021). At the time of writing, the reality of domestic and donor austerity,¹ alongside the interplay of conflict,² as in Ethiopia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and others, growing inequity³ and the triple planetary crises of biodiversity, pollution and climate change are worsening malnutrition around the world, especially among the most vulnerable populations.⁴ Addressing malnutrition, therefore, requires a multi-sectoral approach that cuts across the entire SDG agenda and provides a comprehensive vision of working on numerous crises in a coherent and consistent way.

Integrating nutrition throughout the SDGs helps countries better face multiple crises. This is why nutrition is critical to all 17 goals (see Annex A) and integrating nutrition to its best effect across the UNSDCF cycle ensures the best chance of achieving all SDGs. Concrete efforts to address the situation and get back on track are outlined in section 3.

¹ Research further indicates that the domestic financing of 118 lower-middle-income countries (LMICs) may not reach pre-pandemic spending levels until 2029 (Development Initiatives, 2021) and that donor countries are experiencing an economic downturn. Previous epidemics generally affected LMICs and donors provided financial resources. A unique challenge of this pandemic is that donor countries have been significantly affected. That is why donor countries are more constrained than before in terms of financial resources, such that the private sector and other forms of finance are needed more urgently than before (Development Initiatives, 2021).

² Geopolitics and the emerging multi-polar world have the international system primed towards conflict, and war is the leading cause of hunger. Conflict impacts all parts of the food system, destroying resources and assets, disrupting trade, increasing the price of nutritious food, and reducing food availability (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2021).

³ Due to the compounding socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, the cost of food is rising, increasing levels of moderate and severe food insecurity (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2021). While a healthy diet remains critical for protection against malnutrition, the costs are beyond reach for more than 3 billion people in every region of the world (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2020). Specifically, healthy diets are estimated to be about five times more expensive than diets that use a starchy staple food to meet dietary energy needs (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2020).

⁴ Climate change alters food production through changing temperatures, inconsistent rainfall, droughts, floods and tropical storms (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2021). This is why agricultural production will decline over the following decades and the cost of food will increase (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2021). Furthermore, current dietary patterns and food production practices are unsustainable, contributing to adverse environmental impacts. Here, a feedback loop emerges. While climate change does not lead directly to conflict, it increases indirectly the risks of war by worsening existing social, economic and environmental factors.

THE NEED FOR SYSTEMS THINKING

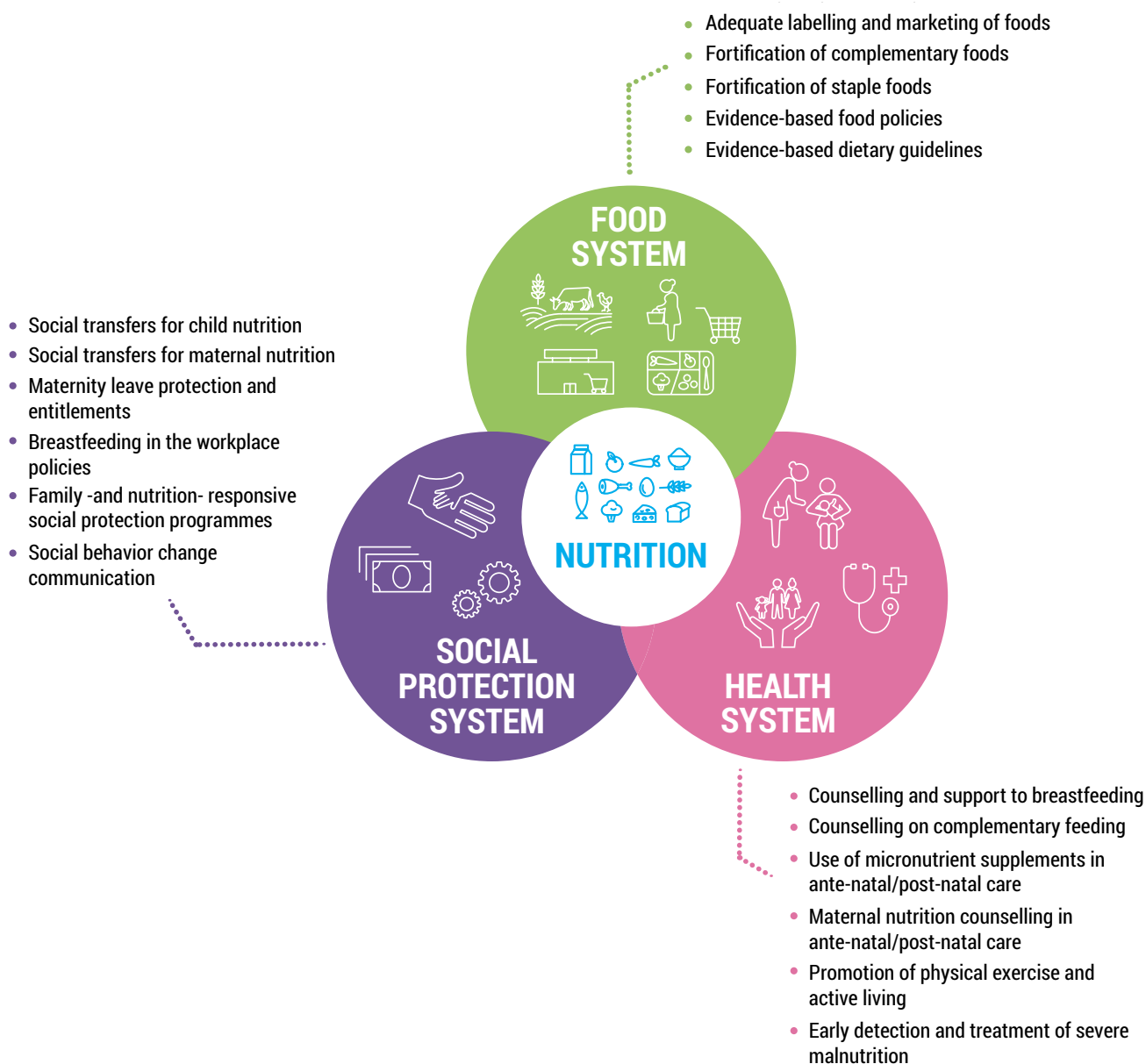
Addressing malnutrition requires a multi-sectoral approach. Multi-sectoral actions, implemented at scale with quality and equity, are essential if we are to effectively reduce malnutrition. In-depth case studies have documented the processes involved in successfully engaging and mobilizing support from multiple sectors to work towards a common goal of tackling malnutrition (Hachethu *et al.*, 2017; Shrimpton *et al.*, 2014; World Bank and UNICEF, 2013; Levinson and Balarajan, 2013; Garrett and Natalicchio, 2011). The consensus is that many sectors have the potential to implement policy actions that will directly or indirectly impact nutrition outcomes (Heidkamp *et al.*, 2021). This encourages a systems-thinking approach to tackling malnutrition and supports policy-makers in outlining the many far-reaching consequences of programmes implemented throughout food systems, especially with regard to vulnerable populations. The systems approach allows decision-makers to implement the right mix of policies and practices needed to improve nutrition outcomes across society, especially for those most at risk.

Member Nations and the international community committed to eradicating malnutrition in all its forms when adopting the SDGs in 2015, building on the WHA global nutrition targets and the Rome Declaration on Nutrition adopted at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) in 2014. This commitment is reiterated in the [United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition](#) (2016–2025) (hereinafter referred to as the Nutrition Decade) declaration, with an accompanying [work programme](#) that centres on six cross-cutting and integrative areas for impact related to the SDGs (FAO and WHO, 2016).⁵ While each thematic area informs and frames the action, they should not be seen as silos; policies and programmes should be linked to several areas simultaneously. The ICN2 and Nutrition Decade documents complement the SDGs and the WHA global nutrition targets in that they outline how numerous actors can work together across sectors to address malnutrition. Building on these efforts, the Tokyo N4G Summit and UNFSS, both held in 2021, helped to advance the nutrition agenda globally, with stakeholders making bold policy, financial and programmatic commitments and outlining the systemic shifts needed to sustainably address malnutrition.

The UNFSS, in particular, set the stage for global food systems transformation, presenting an unprecedented opportunity for countries and stakeholders to jointly identify and implement efforts to build healthier, more sustainable and more equitable food systems. Tools exist to support policy-makers in implementing a systems approach to address malnutrition. For example, the [CFS Voluntary Guidelines On Food Systems and Nutrition](#) act as a guide for governments and relevant stakeholders when designing context-specific policies (CFS, 2021). The Voluntary Guidelines can help countries to define priority actions to achieve nutrition, health and economic, social and environmental objectives to accelerate and align efforts linked to the Nutrition Decade and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Other systems also provide vital entry points, such as the education system for school food and nutrition initiatives, including meals, nutrition education and public food procurement, especially for home-grown school feeding. These efforts combine to form a systems approach to combatting malnutrition.

⁵ The six cross-cutting themes include: i) sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets; ii) aligned health systems providing universal coverage of essential nutrition actions; iii) social protection and nutrition education; iv) trade and investment for improved nutrition; v) safe and supportive environments for nutrition at all ages; and vi) strengthened governance and accountability for nutrition.

Figure 1.
A systems approach to nutrition



Source:

Development Initiatives. 2020. Equity and the right to food: A systemic approach to tackling malnutrition. In: 2020 *Global Nutrition Report*. Bristol, UK. <https://globalnutritionreport.org/blog/equity-and-right-food-systemic-approach-tackling-malnutrition/>

2 Nutrition in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

This guidance note is an updated version of a document published in November 2017, entitled *Guidance note on integration of nutrition in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework* (UNDAF) (UNSCN, 2017). It comes at a critical moment, when many countries are still using the UNDAF, but transitioning to the UNSDCF. Consequently, the guidance note is designed to support the effective integration of nutrition into both frameworks while focusing on the latter. The UNSDCF is deemed more “demand-driven” (country-owned), “open” (involving a wide array of partners across and beyond the United Nations development system), “integrated” (containing single United Nations programme objectives) and “transformative” (centred on “structural transformation”) than the UNDAF and, as such, requires a new way of working.

As stated in [UN General Assembly Resolution 72/279](#), the UNSDCF is now the most important instrument for planning and implementing United Nations development activities at country level. The guiding principles underlying the UNSDCF centre on the human rights-based approach to development – ensuring accountable efforts aimed at gender equality, leaving no one behind and community resilience – and remain at the core of UNCT support for governments. These values outline how the UNSDCF sets out government priorities and associated support required by the United Nations development system. They reflect United Nations reform and the convening leadership of the Resident Coordinator. The UNSDCF serves as a core accountability tool between a UNCT and the host government and between and among UNCT members’ collectively owned development results. Lastly, the UNSDCF should be interwoven with individual United Nations agency Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs). By ensuring the UNSDCF is nutrition sensitive, it is possible for individual agencies to build CPFs that are strong on nutrition.

3 Using the guidance note

The guidance note is meant to be a flexible resource that can be used anytime during the lifetime of the Cooperation Framework, as there are opportunities to integrate and strengthen the focus on nutrition throughout the process. As UNSDCFs generally span three to five years, the guidance note allows users to focus on particular parts at certain times and return to the document years later to study another part as the need arises.

The guidance is intended for United Nations Resident Coordinators, United Nations staff and partners, namely:

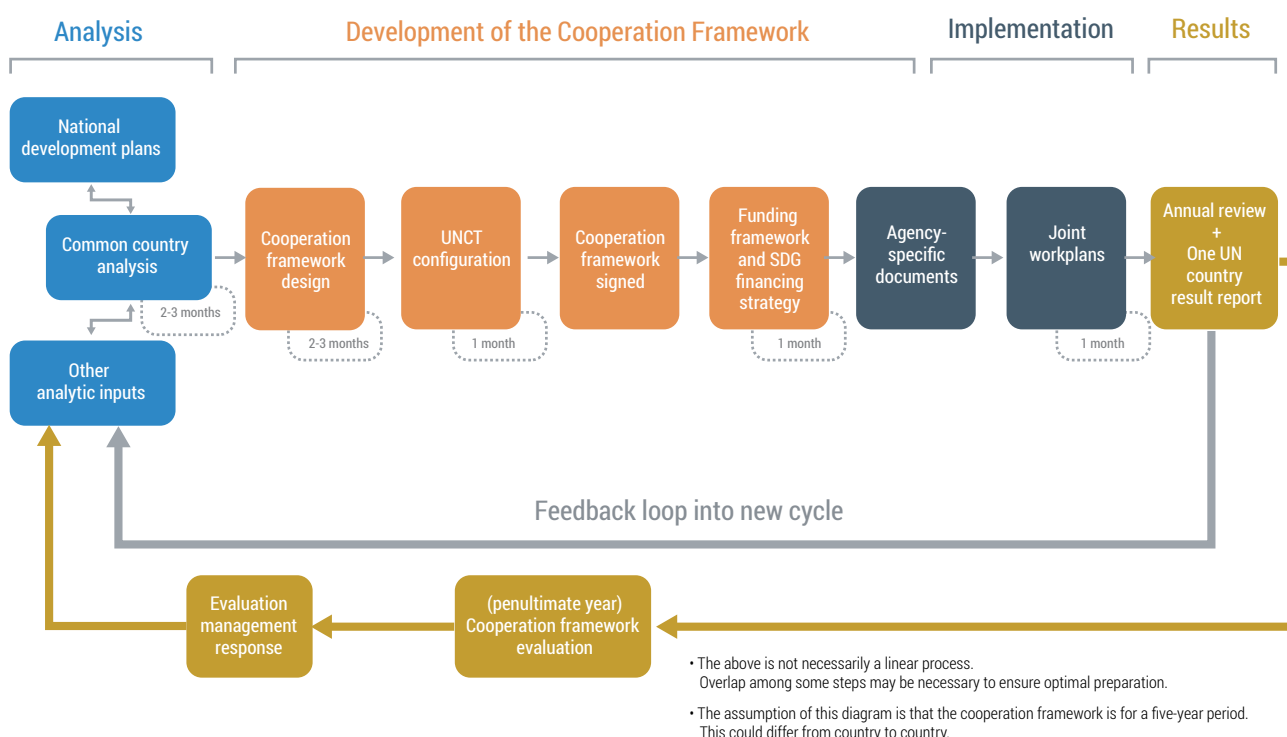
- UNCTs and all programme staff, including nutrition focal points;
- Regional Directors, teams and United Nations staff in peer support groups providing quality support; and
- governments and other relevant stakeholders

Importantly, this guidance note is designed to appreciate the diversity of the stakeholders involved throughout the UNSDCF cycle and acknowledges that UNCTs will include nutrition experts alongside United Nations personnel who are less familiar with the matter. The guidance complements tools provided by specialized United Nations agencies, programmes, funds and the UN-Nutrition Secretariat to support the integration of nutrition across the UNSDCF cycle. Lastly, the UNSDCF cycle ensures continuous learning and adaptive management, and the document's utility lies in helping users to integrate nutrition throughout the UNSDCF (and UNDAF) process. Readers and users of this guidance note are encouraged to connect with the UN-Nutrition Secretariat (unnutrition@fao.org) to share lessons learned and to propose edits and updates. This will ensure that the guidance note remains a living document and evolves with the growing knowledge of what works and what can be better.

In this context, the following three steps allow the user to move quickly through the guidance note:

1. Figure 2 shows the UNSDCF phases and allows the reader to identify the relevant phase in the UNSDCF cycle. The guidance note is designed to take the reader directly to the relevant part of the Country Framework process, focus on it, take what is useful and return to the guidance as the process progresses.
2. Review the checklist focusing on the relevant section.
3. Following the checklist review, more in-depth aspects can be reviewed, including specific actions and related tools and resources for mainstreaming nutrition in that phase of the UNSDCF cycle.

Figure 2.
The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework cycle



Source:
United Nations Sustainable Development Group. 2019. *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework – Internal Guidance*. New York. <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/UN%20Cooperation%20Framework%20Internal%20Guidance%20-%20%201%20June%202022.pdf>

Each of the four main phases – analysis, development, implementation and results – indicated at the top of Figure 2, offers an entry point for integrating nutrition. Readers are encouraged to review Figure 2 to identify where they are:

- Phase 1:** UNSDCF nutrition-related analyses
- Phase 2:** UNSDCF nutrition-related development
- Phase 3:** UNSDCF nutrition-related implementation
- Phase 4:** UNSDCF nutrition-related monitoring and evaluation

Below is a useful checklist. Readers can first review the part relevant to them, then explore that phase in greater detail with the resources at their disposal. The checklist was initially developed as a first-step rapid assessment tool, with the reader encouraged to expand on areas identified in the first review. However, the nutrition integration checklist can be used at any time to cross-check the work done and ensure critical considerations are taken into account.

Checklist: Integrating nutrition into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework cycle

ABOUT THIS CHECKLIST

This Nutrition Checklist is designed as a self-assessment tool for reviewing the level of integration of nutrition at each phase of the United Nations Cooperation Framework – United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) or United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) – cycle. The checklist is intended for United Nations Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams involved in the UNSDCF development process. The checklist aims to complement the guidance note on integrating nutrition into the UNSDCF. Kindly refer to the guidance note for further resources and support throughout this process.



1. Ensuring that UNSDCF situational analyses fully incorporate nutrition

- Does the **common country analysis (CCA) identify national and sub-national nutrition outcome trends and challenges, the determinants of malnutrition and its underlying causes** (such as the health and sanitation environment, including food safety; food consumption patterns and dietary needs, food availability and seasonality, household access to food; gender dynamics and feeding/dietary and care practices) and does it identify the trends and drivers of all forms of malnutrition (such as wasting, stunting, underweight, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight, obesity and resulting diet-related non-communicable diseases)?
- Has progress been assessed against national nutrition targets, the 2025 WHA global nutrition targets and diet-related non-communicable disease (NCD) targets and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
- Does it highlight the role of nutrition in achieving sustainable development, including the role of nutrition in human capital development?
- Does the CCA prioritize **specific aspects of poverty reduction and equity issues as well as gender dimensions**, strengthening human rights protections and improving human health and well-being to tackle the underlying drivers of malnutrition?
- Are **nutritionally vulnerable groups (such as children, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women) and other vulnerable groups (such as indigenous groups and persons with disabilities)** identified in the analyses?
- Is the CCA based on a review of national policies, plans and programmes on nutrition, agriculture, health and other sectors relevant to nutrition, through a lens of human rights, including the right to adequate food and the highest attainable standard of health?
- Does the CCA describe **multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder governance arrangements** (at national and sub-national level) for nutrition, specifying management, oversight, coordination and reporting mechanisms?
- Is there a national comprehensive plan on nutrition, incorporating a focus on **maternal, infant and young child nutrition** and containing priorities, targets, strategies and indicators supported by guidance?
- Does the CCA consider **a systems approach** to address (prevent and treat) malnutrition, including action across food systems, health systems (including psychosocial/mental health) and social protection systems?
- Has the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition been referenced/consulted to ensure a systemic, multi-sectoral, science and evidence-based approach to food systems and the multidimensional causes of malnutrition in all its forms?



2. Integrating nutrition throughout UNSDCF development

- Have **nutrition focal points** in the agencies/United Nations country teams (**UNCTs**) or **UN-Nutrition platforms** been identified/consulted at an early stage of the development process?
- Have **nutrition specialists/focal points in government counterparts** been identified or/and consulted to accompany the development process?
- Has the country made **SMART** (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) **policy commitments and published documents** through the Nutrition Decade, UNFSS, N4G summit or through regional or national frameworks? Have plans been articulated to operationalize and implement these commitments? What is the level of progress?
- Has a nutrition investment case been conducted in the country to **inform policy, planning and programming**?
- Has a theory of change been developed that describes how the outputs under the UNSDCF will address the identified nutrition challenges (including the direct and underlying causes of malnutrition), in alignment with the [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\) Conceptual Framework](#)?
- Have nutrition-related lessons learned, gaps and opportunities from past or current initiatives relevant to the UNSDCF design been integrated?
- Are concrete actions for addressing malnutrition identified for key sectors relevant to nutrition, including linking to health, food and social protection systems?
- Does the cooperation framework include concrete nutrition targets to be achieved?
- Are measures identified to ensure effective coordination and a coherent response on food security and nutrition matters across the **humanitarian-development nexus**?

3. Incorporating nutrition into the UNSDCF implementation strategy and resource allocation

- Is nutrition adequately reflected in the UNSDCF implementation strategy?
- Does the UNSDCF describe how the mechanisms for ensuring operational plans – such as sub-national plans, nutrition-relevant sectoral programme plans and plans for agencies – are **linked to the strategic priorities in the UNSDCF**, coordinated and integrate mutual accountability mechanisms?
- Does the UNSDCF describe the implementation pathway for the joint targeting of interventions for the efficient use of resources to improve food security and address malnutrition?
- Does the UNSDCF outline approaches to meet **technical assistance requirements to implement planned actions**? This includes arrangements for sourcing in-country or external experts, where appropriate; identifying resources required and funding sources; and mutual accountability mechanisms.
- Can you clearly identify how using a **food system and nutrition lens** helps your UNCT prioritize national and sector development initiatives that it should support as a matter of priority in the UNSDCF?
- Have nutrition capacity development needs (of **government representatives at all levels, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations [NGOs], policy-makers**, etc.) been identified?
- Have human and/or financial resources (such as **staffing, technical assistance, information technology [IT], capacity development**) been allocated for implementing UNSDCF outputs/milestones, including for nutrition?



4. Nutrition integration in UNSDCF monitoring and evaluation

- Are United Nations agencies working in country **adopting the Cooperation Framework** as the basis for their own **country programming framework (CPF)**?
- Does the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework specify how the nutrition information systems (routine and survey) should be strengthened and used to inform decision-making?
- Does the M&E framework describe the processes for documenting and disseminating **best practices and lessons learned to support iterative management**?
- Does the M&E framework outline the **multi-sectoral nutrition information platforms** in place or to be developed to support data analysis, knowledge management, learning and communication?
- Does the M&E framework describe the types of data analysis that will be performed, including data quality issues and the mechanisms in place to support rigorous data analysis and evaluation? Does this reflect nutrition in a comprehensive way?
- Are **nutrition-related SDG indicators and relevant national nutrition targets** integrated into the UNSDCF or UNDAF monitoring framework at relevant result levels?

NUTRITION CHECKLIST *(sample)*

LEGEND ✓ = Explicitly included ○ = Partly included ✗ = Not included

Category	Area	Nutrition integration	Comments
Nutrition integration across the pillars	Pillar 1: X	○	
	Pillar 2: X	✓	E.g.: Nutrition is explicitly addressed in a multi-sectoral manner
	Pillar 3: X *can include more pillars depending on specific document	✓	
Nutrition integration in programmatic themes	E.g.: Human rights	○	
	E.g.: Youth	✗	
	E.g.: HIV/AIDS	○	E.g.: Nutrition is not considered in relation to HIV/AIDS within the programmatic theme
	E.g.: People living with disabilities	✗	
	E.g.: Agriculture resilience	○	
WHA/GNR targets as indicators	Child stunting	✓	
	Child wasting	✗	E.g.: No indicator provided on wasting
	Exclusive breastfeeding	✗	
	Anemia among women of reproductive age (WRA)	✗	
	Child overweight	✗	
	Obesity (men)	✗	E.g.: No indicator provided on wasting
	Obesity (women)	✗	
	Diabetes (men)	✗	
	Diabetes (women)	✗	
MSP engagement	Multi-stakeholder engagement	✓	E.g.: Reference is made to engagement with various stakeholders across all outcomes
	Multi-sectoral engagement	✓	E.g.: The UNSDCF/UNDAF considers linkages between different sectors covered under each outcome
Global commitments	E.g.: Nutrition Decade, N4G	✓	E.g.: The UNSDCF/UNDAF is aligned with all action areas of the Nutrition Decade, excluding action area 4 (trade and investment for nutrition)
Systems approach	E.g.: Are concrete actions for addressing malnutrition identified for key sectors, including health, food, and/or social protection systems?	✓	E.g.: The outcomes and priority areas of the UNSDCF/UNDAF have reflected a systems approach

Phase 1. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework nutrition-related analyses

This section highlights the nutrition-related aspects that can be considered in the common country analysis (CCA) stage.

Some important questions to consider when integrating nutrition into the CCA, specifically, include:

- Does the CCA highlight the role of nutrition in achieving sustainable development, including the role of nutrition in human capital development?
- Does the CCA prioritize specific aspects of poverty reduction and equity issues, as well as gender dimensions, strengthening human rights protections and improving human health and well-being to tackle the underlying drivers of malnutrition?
- Is the CCA based on a review of national policy frameworks and regulations, and policies, plans and programmes on nutrition across sectors relevant to nutrition, with a focus on human rights, including the right to adequate food and the highest attainable standard of health?
- Does the CCA describe multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder governance arrangements (at national and sub-national levels) for nutrition, specifying management, oversight, coordination and reporting mechanisms?
- Is there a national nutrition plan or a comprehensive plan on maternal-infant and young child nutrition containing priorities, targets, strategies and indicators?

Other analytical efforts include assessing where United Nations efforts can complement national development plans and align with national nutrition plans and review whether nutrition-related indicators are integrated into cross-cutting themes, such as gender empowerment and poverty.

UNCTs support for the inclusion of nutrition in the CCA is intended to strengthen national analytical processes and products related to all forms of malnutrition. This includes reaching consensus on prioritizing development problems and opportunities. This phase also identifies the requirements for capacity enhancement to address malnutrition, focusing on the most affected and marginalized population groups (through the guiding principle of leaving no one behind). The support thereby lays a foundation for the ultimate goal of strengthening overarching national development and sectoral policies, strategies and plans that include nutrition, stronger evidence-based decision-making and well-targeted support, especially among the most vulnerable in difficult-to-access areas.

ENTRY POINTS

- (1.1) Contributing to government-led analyses, ensuring robust nutrition indicators.
- (1.2) Supporting nutrition-related studies to assess country progress and outstanding challenges (as required).
- (1.3) Assessing the risks to the nutritional status of the population and opportunities to mitigate or address them as part of a CCA.
- (1.4) Participating in the prioritization exercise for the UNSDCF.

ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTING NUTRITION IN PHASE 1

- Embed nutrition considerations into ongoing country analytical work associated with various sectors and generate new information on nutrition-development linkages. Here, the key is to capitalize on analytical tools and processes used by relevant United Nations agencies.
- Analyse the burden of malnutrition in all its forms (such as wasting, stunting, underweight, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight or obesity), both nationally and sub-nationally, and assess progress towards national nutrition targets and international commitments, such as the SDGs.
- Identify the immediate, underlying and enabling determinants of malnutrition relevant to your context, using tools such as the [UNICEF conceptual framework on maternal and child nutrition](#) to identify priority areas where action is needed to address malnutrition (UNICEF, 2021b). Reflect on how these determinants link to multiple sectors, requiring multi-sectoral action.
- Analyse existing nutrition programmes and identify success factors, gaps, bottlenecks and priority actions.
- Assess the scope and implications of all forms of malnutrition, including:
 - i) the identification of groups particularly vulnerable to malnutrition based on nutritional needs, socioeconomic and geographical factors (such as adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, young children, and marginalized population groups, including those facing an emergency);
 - ii) risks (such as increased morbidity and mortality and increased poverty from undernutrition, obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases, as well as the increasing costs of health care); and
 - iii) opportunities (such as improvements in data collection and analysis, strengthened national and partner commitment to nutrition).
- Identify the commitments made during the 2021 Tokyo N4G Summit and UNFSS. Such commitments offer opportunities to identify and track progress with a view to improving nutrition through a systems approach focused on integrating and aligning nutrition across food, health and social protection systems.
- Similarly, identify the national pathways for food systems transformation developed following national food systems dialogues in the lead-up to the UNFSS. They can be used to inform analysis relating to priorities and actions for food systems transformation.
- Share information with the group to increase understanding of how improved nutrition influences the achievement of national development priorities in the context of the SDGs, the WHA global nutrition targets, ICN2 follow-up and Nutrition Decade implementation.
- Identify national nutrition champions. They can be instrumental in making a case for country-specific nutrition evidence and increased recognition of nutrition as a national development priority.
- Identify requirements for strengthening institutional capacity to improve nutrition and accelerate progress towards achieving national sustainable development priorities with equity, with these needs reflected in the UNSDCF accordingly.
- Give key government actors targeted information on how improved nutrition is essential to sustainable development and the benefits of improving nutrition, especially among vulnerable population groups.
- Support stakeholders in enhancing their ability to assess, prioritize, monitor, evaluate and share experience.

- Other actions include providing qualified United Nations programme personnel or external experts to support relevant government work on assessing the magnitude and scope of the malnutrition problem in the country, identifying the most vulnerable population groups, the risks and opportunities.
- United Nations colleagues can also assist in synthesizing and packaging key findings to increase the effectiveness of presentations to planning, finance and other key sectoral ministries that make decisions on national nutrition-related development priorities. It makes sense to build on existing tools.
- Important tasks at this point include advocating for and supporting specific studies to inform the UNSDCF and facilitate national planning that considers the need to improve nutrition for accelerated achievement of national development priorities. Intersectoral policy coherence for nutrition, investments in the food environment, and budget and cost analyses could also be considered.
- Targeted CCA studies should identify risks to the nutritional status of the population, nutrition-related vulnerabilities, opportunities to mitigate or address them as part of a CCA, and ensure that the Cooperation Framework remains relevant to nutrition-related SDGs, capacity constraints and ways to overcome them.
- Participants in the prioritization activities should include UNCT members who can speak to the importance of mainstreaming nutritional considerations into development cooperation activities and who are aware of existing United Nations capacity, initiatives and experience. This should ensure that the process of determining national development priorities takes into account both nutritional vulnerabilities and nutrition-related risks (such as the adverse impacts of all forms of malnutrition on the achievement of the SDGs), the aims of the Nutrition Decade, and opportunities (such as progress on the achievement of the SDGs that can be attributed to better nutrition outcomes).

Phase 1. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework nutrition-related analysis tools and resources

NUTRITION-RELATED SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

- *Landscape Analysis on countries' readiness to accelerate action in nutrition* (WHO, 2012): In-depth, country-specific reviews of the challenges countries face, opportunities that exist and actions that should be prioritized to accelerate the scale-up of effective interventions and programmes.
- *United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Conceptual Framework on Maternal and Child Nutrition* (UNICEF, 2021b): Conceptual framework to support the identification of immediate, underlying and enabling determinants of maternal and child malnutrition. The 2020 framework builds on UNICEF's 1990 conceptual work, acknowledges the increase in forms of malnutrition – undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight – and highlights the role of diets and care as immediate determinants of maternal and child nutrition.
- The UN-Nutrition Secretariat's [country-level analytical tools](#), provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in its capacity as host agency of the UN-Nutrition Secretariat.

MULTIPLE OVERLAPPING DEPRIVATION/VULNERABILITY AND CAPACITY ANALYSIS

- *UNICEF Step-by-Step Guidelines to the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA)* (UNICEF, 2012): Provides a comprehensive approach to the multidimensional aspects of (child) poverty and deprivation. Encompasses a large set of tools used in multidimensional poverty and deprivation analyses, ranging from deprivation headcounts in single dimensions via multiple overlap analysis to multidimensional deprivation ratios and their decomposition. Based on a holistic definition of child well-being, concentrating on access to various goods and services that are crucial to survival and development.
- *Strengthening Nutrition Action* (FAO and WHO, 2018): Provides a resource guide for countries based on the policy recommendations of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2).

DIETARY DIVERSITY ASSESSMENTS/FOOD SECURITY AND VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS

- *Minimum dietary diversity for women* (FAO, 2021): Defines and describes the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) indicator. This indicator has been shown to reflect a key dimension of diet quality: micronutrient adequacy across 11 micronutrients and assessed via ten defined food groups. Women who consume at least five of the ten food groups are categorized as having a diet that is adequate in terms of micronutrient content. The indicator constitutes an important step towards filling the need for metrics for use in national and sub-national assessments of diet quality. Insufficient nutrient intake before and during pregnancy and lactation can affect both women and their infants' survival and well-being, and poor diet quality is the common denominator across all forms of malnutrition, with diet-related non-communicable diseases now associated with more premature deaths among adults than any other risk factor worldwide.
- *FAO Guidelines for Measuring Household and Individual Food Dietary Diversity* (FAO, 2010): The dietary diversity scores set out in these Guidelines consist of a simple count of food groups that a household or individual has consumed over 24 hours. Data for both household and individual scores are collected via a dietary diversity questionnaire, although the way the score is calculated is slightly different in each case. The data can also be analysed for information on specific food groups.
- *World Food Programme (WFP) Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) Guidelines* (WFP, 2009): Designed to assess the profiles of food-insecure and vulnerable households, identify the root causes of hunger and analyse risks and emerging vulnerabilities among populations in crisis-prone countries. The CFSVA also generates recommendations on the best response options (food or non-food) to reduce hunger, target the neediest and inform preparedness. The guidelines present recommended procedures and protocols for conducting a desk review, implementing a large household survey, analysing quantitative and qualitative data and conducting risk and response analyses.
- *Fill the Nutrient Gap* (WFP, 2020b): The tool analyses the nutrition situation in a country and identifies the barriers faced by the most vulnerable to accessing and consuming healthy and nutritious foods. The project is carried out in collaboration with a range of national stakeholders. Its results are used to inform policies and programming in social protection, food systems, health, agriculture, education and other sectors that can improve nutrition.
- *WFP Food Assistance for Assets* (WFP, n.d.): Addresses immediate food needs through cash, voucher or food transfers. At the same time, it promotes the building or rehabilitation of assets that will improve long-term food security and resilience. Food Assistance for Assets activities aim to create healthier natural environments, reduce the risks and impact of climate shocks, increase food productivity and strengthen resilience to natural disasters over time.

Phase 2. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework nutrition-related development

Phase 2 refers to the development and design of the UNSDCF itself, which is consultative and agreed with the host government. Inviting nutrition experts into discussions ensures that nutrition-related elements identified in the CCA phase (phase 1) lead to strong nutrition integration in phase 2. Issues such as developing a theory of change and strategic priorities or concurrently detailing outcomes and outputs are accomplished through careful negotiation.

ENTRY POINTS

- (2.1) Review existing country analytical work through a nutrition lens, ensuring relevant nutrition indicators.
- (2.2) Engage with relevant stakeholders in mapping the national planning process.
- (2.3) Provide a nutrition perspective on identification of the UNCT's comparative advantages/gaps.
- (2.4) Nutrition mapping of agency programmes and projects.

ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTING NUTRITION IN PHASE 2

- Be sure to include nutrition experts and key nutrition stakeholders, including all relevant actors from key nutrition-related sectors (such as agriculture, education, health, social protection and water, sanitation and hygiene [WASH]), in the UNSDCF design and in national steering committees or advisory bodies.
- Ensure nutrition is identified as a priority (albeit one of many) in the UNSDCF, ideally with three to five priorities that take into account nutrition vulnerabilities and related risks and opportunities. These should incorporate national SMART⁶ nutrition commitments made by the government in the context of the SDGs, Tokyo N4G summit (2021) and the UNFSS (2021). These entry points provide an opportunity to determine how best to support the implementation and achievement of the national commitments and ensure that nutrition concerns are given due consideration when making this selection.
- Where UNSDCF outcomes do not clearly refer to nutrition, they should still be designed in such a way as to address the immediate and underlying drivers of malnutrition.
- Adapt stated goals and objectives to the national context and be consistent with internationally agreed recommendations (such as the SDGs, the WHA global nutrition targets, the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition [2016–2025], the Zero Hunger Challenge, the ICN2 Rome Declaration on Nutrition and its accompanying Framework for Action on Nutrition) and international human rights standards, as well as national nutrition targets and nutrition-related commitments (such as N4G commitments, national food systems transformational pathways or operational roadmaps for the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting, where applicable).
- As countries often face resource constraints, highlight to the team the key role of nutrition in sustainable development, the social, health and economic benefits of investing in nutrition and the costs of inaction.

⁶ Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.

- Engage effectively with relevant ministries, executive offices and legal bodies to raise issues and advocate for the integration of nutrition into national and sectoral development planning and priorities.
- Raise UNCT awareness of existing nutrition vulnerabilities and associated risks and opportunities, and identify where the team may have a comparative advantage to act.
- Identify and engage with country partners who can conduct further analysis and help make the investment case for mainstreaming nutrition into national and sectoral planning processes, particularly in terms of human development and sustained economic growth.
- Building on the assessment carried out in phase 1, add value to the review of existing country analytical work by identifying the magnitude and scope of major nutrition problems, relevant indicators and the potential to address them. Identify gaps and opportunities to improve the nutrition situation and scale up priority nutrition-related actions that have already been highlighted in existing country analytical work.
- At this point, it is helpful to review nutrition-related international frameworks:
 - How the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) promotes a systems approach to combating malnutrition and is a follow-up to ICN2, contributing to the achievement of global nutrition and diet-related non-communicable disease targets by 2025 and to the realization of the SDGs by 2030. The Nutrition Decade [work programme](#) is a valuable resource when reviewing how to consider nutrition in policymaking (FAO and WHO, 2016).
 - The [Food Assistance for Assets Programme](#) is another useful approach to integrating a nutrition response (WFP. n.d.).
 - In February 2021, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) adopted the [Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition](#), which serve as a contribution to the Nutrition Decade and as an intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder policy tool (CFS, 2021).
 - One hundred and sixteen countries (as of June 2022) developed [national pathways for food systems transformation](#) in the lead-up to the UNFSS, based on participatory food systems dialogues. These can be used to inform priorities and actions in the UNSDCF framework.
- To map the national planning process, it is essential to work with relevant stakeholders to identify opportunities to add value to national development planning and budget cycles by ensuring that development initiatives include nutrition considerations. The aim is to build on existing understanding of the national planning process by identifying opportunities for more explicit integration of development initiatives that will enhance nutrition and the significant role that improving nutrition can play in accelerating progress on sustainable development in general.
- Ensure that the team's capacities, skills, knowledge of nutrition, vulnerability assessments and analyses of risks and opportunities involved in improving nutrition are considered in the assessment of the UNCT's comparative advantages and gaps. The increased understanding that arises from this assessment can be used when setting UNSDCF priorities and determining where and how to enhance UNCT nutrition capacity.
- Undertake nutrition mapping of all agency programmes and projects at country level, emphasizing those currently being formulated. This action may involve modifying or adding planned results, performance indicators and activities to strengthen the UNSDCF results matrix and workplan to ensure results are better aligned with nutrition-related outputs/or outcomes.
- The UNSDCF should also include results and activities designed to strengthen the country's capacity to integrate nutrition indicators into sectoral policies and plans and monitor and report on progress towards national and sectoral development goals, including the nutrition-related SDGs. There must also be capacities and funds to implement nutrition-relevant programmes and policies.

Phase 2. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework nutrition-related analysis tools and resources

- *Improving Nutrition through Multi-sectoral Approaches* (World Bank, 2013): Provides operational guidance on mainstreaming nutrition activities into multiple sectors, with a focus on agriculture, social protection and health. It includes an overview of the links between nutrition and poverty reduction and represents a first step in operationalizing a multi- sectoral approach to improving nutrition worldwide.
- *Strengthening Nutrition Actions* (FAO, 2018): A resource guide for countries based on the policy recommendations of ICN2.
- *The Compendium of Actions for Nutrition (CAN)* (UN Network for SUN/REACH Secretariat, 2016): A facilitation tool encompassing both nutrition-specific and -sensitive actions to help foster multi-sectoral dialogue at country level, particularly on nutrition-related policy formulation and planning. The actions are classified into evidence-based categories. It includes both narrative guidance (including action sheets) and a matrix of potential multi-sectoral nutrition actions.
- *Nutrition Capacity Assessment Guidance Package – Part I: Guidance Note and Part II: Tools and Resources* (Scaling Up Nutrition, 2016): Aims to assist countries in comprehensively assessing multi-sectoral and sectoral capacity needs for the effective scale-up of nutrition actions and subsequent design of a capacity development response that is integrated into a broader national capacity development agenda for nutrition.
- *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework – Internal Guidance* (UNSDG, 2019): Provides overall guidance on how to support countries in developing a UNSDCF.

Phase 3. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework nutrition-related implementation

Phase 3 outlines five entry points for integrating nutrition into the UNSDCF strategic cycle. These entry points move progressively from the overall strategic planning level (UNSDCF preparation and national planning cycle) through programme preparation to project design and the development of an annual workplan, including an evaluation and monitoring framework. During this phase, the implementation process of a UNSDCF provides United Nations agencies with three general pathways for developing their programmes.⁷ The primary aim is to ensure that the in-country programming by a United Nations agency is reflected clearly in the Cooperation Framework's strategic priorities, outcomes and outputs. Hence, the UNSDCF is a United Nations agreement with a host government on development priorities and support focus areas. Joint workplans reflect UNSDCF outputs, in reference to key United Nations development contributions with regard to all forms of malnutrition, delivered jointly or by individual entities.

ENTRY POINTS

- (3.1) Ensuring UNSDCF outcomes provide a collective support system for national development.
- (3.2) Supporting the documentation of nutrition impact (as required).
- (3.3) Including nutrition vulnerabilities, risks and opportunities in the annual workplan (or equivalent).

ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTING NUTRITION IN PHASE 3

- Identify as early as possible opportunities to ensure that development efforts appropriately address significant nutritional vulnerabilities, in line with national policies, plans and priorities. This should preferably be done as part of the country analysis in phase 1.
- Ensure that nutrition considerations (if mainstreamed) or the nutrition pillar are not overlooked due to time and resource constraints.
- Assess efforts to improve nutrition with a priority focus on the most affected and marginalized population groups against country priorities, as well as WHA global nutrition targets and SDG targets and indicators.

⁷ The UNSDCF internal guidance note provides three general pathways for United Nations agencies:

Option A: United Nations development system entities adopt the Cooperation Framework as their own country development programme document; they do not prepare a separate entity document.

Option B: United Nations development system entities develop an entity-specific country development programme document with Cooperation Framework outcomes copied verbatim.

Option C: United Nations development system entities develop an entity-specific country development programme document with Cooperation Framework outcomes copied verbatim, plus additional outcomes that are not in the Cooperation Framework, included only on an exceptional basis to capture normative and standard-setting activities not prioritized in the Cooperation Framework.

- UNSDCF outcomes should clearly and demonstrably enhance the nutrition status of the most vulnerable population groups and facilitate progress towards sustainable development with equity. This helps to ensure that even when UNSDCF outcomes do not directly relate to improving nutrition, opportunities still exist to influence actions that enhance nutrition across different sectors.
- The documentation of nutrition impact should be routinely included in agency nutrition-related programmes and projects to demonstrate the impact on nutrition. In addition, documenting the importance of nutrition to sustainable development progress can help inform nutrition advocacy and policy dialogue.
- Ensuring that actions to improve nutrition are included in annual workplans and other plans (including nutrition governance support) is essential during this phase. The costs of integrating nutrition into programmes and projects should also be estimated and included in the UNSDCF budget. The annual workplan should be assessed to ensure consistency with these efforts. For example, the annual workplan needs to include specific actions in response to nutrition vulnerabilities, risks and opportunities, as appropriate.

Phase 3. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework nutrition-related implementation tools and resources

- *UN Global Nutrition Agenda: Delivering on the commitment to eradicate malnutrition in all its forms: The role of the UN system* (Scaling Up Nutrition, 2015): Should serve to stimulate dialogue among United Nations agencies at all levels on how best to align their activities, given their specific mandates and resources, in the context of a changing global development system. Working towards achieving the joint goals should contribute to more efficient use of resources, less duplication of effort and greater synergy among agency activities. The United Nations General Assembly proposes outcomes, goals, outputs and activities to inform priority setting and work planning by agencies and inter-agency teams at global, regional and country level.
- *Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA)* (CFS, 2015): The objective of the CFS-FFA is to improve the food security and nutrition of populations affected by, or at risk of, protracted crises by addressing critical manifestations and building resilience, adapting to specific challenges and helping to address underlying causes.
- *Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)* (2014): The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) was a high-level intergovernmental meeting that focused global attention on addressing malnutrition in all its forms. Over 2 200 participants attended the meeting, including representatives from more than 170 governments, 150 representatives from civil society and nearly 100 from the business community. The two main outcome documents – the *Rome Declaration on Nutrition*⁸ and the *Framework for Action*⁹ – were endorsed by participating governments at the conference, committing world leaders to establishing national policies aimed at eradicating malnutrition and transforming food systems to make nutritious diets available to all. Taken together, these form the *Work Programme of the United Nations Decade of Action on*

⁸ The Rome Declaration calls for the United Nations system, including the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), to work more effectively together to support national and regional efforts and enhance international cooperation and development assistance to accelerate progress in addressing malnutrition.

⁹ The Framework for Action also adopts the existing World Health Assembly 2025 global targets for improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition and the targets for non-communicable disease risk factor reduction to be achieved by 2025. It is a voluntary framework, composed of 60 recommendations.

Nutrition (2016–2025), which supports country implementation of the Framework for Action; this document describes its aims, added value, and guiding principles; key areas for priority action (action areas); modalities of engagement; roles of Member States and other stakeholders; mechanisms and tools for driving action (means of implementation).

- Outputs of the UN-Nutrition *analytical exercises*, such as the *UN-Nutrition Inventory and Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping* exercises: UN-Nutrition Inventories enable UNCTs to identify gaps and overlaps in United Nations support for a country and help underpin the development of joint strategies to improve collaboration and convergence on nutrition. The inventories provide a comprehensive and common framework/language allowing United Nations agencies in the same country to compare the targeting, concentration, scale and localization of their contributions (investments) to nutrition in a coherent way.
- *Strengthening Nutrition Action* (FAO, 2018): A resource guide for countries based on the policy recommendations of ICN2.
- *Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition* (CFS, 2021): The CFS adopted the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition at its forty-seventh plenary session in February 2021. They are an intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder negotiated tool for governments and their partners to develop appropriate policies, investments and institutional arrangements to address the causes of hunger and malnutrition in all its forms from a food systems perspective. Importantly, the Voluntary Guidelines need to be used in conjunction with the UNSDCF-related guidance available on the FAO Platform (see <https://www.fao.org/evidence-platform-agri-food-systems-nutrition/en>).
- *The Compendium of Actions for Nutrition (CAN)* (UN Network for SUN/REACH Secretariat, 2016): The CAN was designed to provide an understanding of the breadth of actions needed to combat malnutrition, facilitate multi-sectoral dialogue and spur action at country level, particularly on nutrition-related policy and planning. The compendium does not prescribe a specific set of nutrition actions, but it does recognize that prioritization is critical.
- *Nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems in practice Options for intervention* (FAO, 2017): Addresses this need by providing a list of food system-based intervention options that have great potential to improve nutrition and a set of very concrete entry points for maximizing the impact of each of these interventions, including through the creation of an enabling environment.
- *Nutrition-sensitive value chains: A guide for project design – Volume I* and *Volume II* (IFAD, 2018a; 2018b): Fills a key knowledge gap in the emerging field of value chains for nutrition by providing guidance on how to design nutrition-sensitive value-chain projects, with a particular focus on smallholder producers. The guide is relevant to development actors in general and organizations working in agriculture and rural development, in particular. The guide comes in two volumes: volume I provides validated step-by step guidance for project design, while its companion volume II presents practical resources, tools and templates to be used at each step of the design process.

Phase 4. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework nutrition-related monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting provide a critical opportunity to ensure adaptive programming throughout the UNSDCF cycle, where the CCA described in phase 1 serves as a baseline for M&E efforts in phase 4. The view is that CCAs become a real-time monitoring, review and reporting function, allowing UNSDCFs to remain responsive to changing contexts. United Nations results and M&E groups should meet at least twice a year to reflect on and learn from implementation monitoring reports, including SDG indicators. Lastly, the core reporting function for UNSDCF outputs and outcomes is [UNINFO](#), through which the Resident Coordinator should submit the One UN Country Results Report to the host government and key partners at least once a year (UNINFO, 2022).

ENTRY POINTS

- (4.1) When assessing the extent to which UNSDCF results contribute to national priorities and improved nutrition outcomes.
- (4.2) When providing feedback into country analysis and planning.

ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTING NUTRITION IN PHASE 4

- Align the M&E of nutrition-related interventions with the UNSDCF M&E plan, with the latter acknowledging the links between the achievement of national nutrition targets and the achievement of the SDGs.
- Include nutrition-related impact targets and expected results in the M&E framework, as set out in the UNSDCF. The M&E framework should also include annual output goals (such as intended coverage). To ensure standardization, indicators should be adapted from internationally agreed frameworks, including the nutrition-related SDGs, the 2025 WHA global nutrition targets and diet-related non-communicable disease (NCD) targets, the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting and commitments made under the Nutrition Decade, N4G and the UNFSS.
- Conduct periodic nutrition assessments (such as desk reviews, field visits, UN-Nutrition Inventories and Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping exercises) during implementation to review expected improvements in access to identified nutrition-related actions, as well as to identify new, unexpected challenges due to emergencies, disasters and other unforeseen circumstances.
- Encourage the participating United Nations agencies to engage in joint programming on nutrition.
- Describe the processes for documenting and disseminating best practices and lessons learned in the M&E framework. This action provides continuous improvement and learning, forming an integral part of UNSDCF design towards adaptive programming.

Important issues to consider here include:

- i) How will nutrition programmes and projects integrate new information on emerging issues, risks, vulnerabilities, costs and benefits, and access to identified nutrition actions?
- ii) Are systems in place to ensure that knowledge gained from M&E is used to inform ongoing and future planning and programming related to nutrition?
- iii) Does the M&E framework describe the processes for documenting and disseminating best practices and lessons learned?
- iv) Does the M&E framework describe the types of data analysis that will be performed, including data-quality issues and the mechanisms in place to support rigorous data analysis and evaluation, and does this clearly relate to aspects of malnutrition?
- v) Are systems in place to ensure the specific monitoring of impacts by gender, age, geography and socioeconomic group and that this information is integrated into evaluations, results assessments and future planning related to nutrition?
- vi) Will lessons from the evaluation of programmes, projects and initiatives and management responses be available when new outcomes are being formulated or projects or programmes are being identified, designed and appraised?
- vii) Are there assurances that the evaluation of pilot initiatives will be completed and reported before such initiatives are replicated or scaled up?

Phase 4. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework nutrition-related M&E tools and resources

- [UNDP Evaluation Guidelines](#) (UNDP, 2021): Provides guidance on results-based management of programming and performance, emphasizing the strengthening of focus on development changes and real improvements in people's lives.
- [Global nutrition targets 2025: policy brief series](#) (WHO, 2014a): In 2012, WHA Resolution 65.6 endorsed a comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition, which set out six global nutrition targets to be reached by 2025.¹⁰
- [NCD Global Monitoring Framework](#) (WHO, 2011): The United Nations General Assembly adopted this framework in 2011 following the [Political Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases](#). WHO developed the global monitoring framework to enable the global tracking of progress on preventing and controlling major NCDs, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung diseases and diabetes, and their key risk factors.

¹⁰ The six global nutrition actions include: i) achieve a 40 percent reduction in the number of children under five who are stunted; ii) achieve a 50 percent reduction in anaemia in women of reproductive age; iii) achieve a 30 percent reduction in low birth weight; iv) ensure that there is no increase in childhood overweight; v) increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months up to at least 50 percent; and vi) reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5 percent.

- *Strengthening Nutrition Action* (FAO, 2018): A resource guide for countries based on the policy recommendations of ICN2.
- *The Compendium of Actions for Nutrition (CAN)* (UN Network for SUN/REACH Secretariat, 2016): Guides those responsible for the M&E of investment projects in food and agriculture (including value chains, social development and rural development) who need to demonstrate that their projects lead to intermediary results towards improved nutrition. The compendium compiles the primary nutrition-relevant indicators that can be used for the M&E of food and agriculture investments and shows the types of investment for which each type of indicator is most appropriate.
- *Nutrition Targets and Indicators for the Post-2015 Sustained Development Goals: Accountability for the Measurement of Results in Nutrition: A Technical Note* (UNSCN, 2015): Proposes global nutrition targets and indicators, embedding nutrition indicators in the SDGs and intervention coverage indicators for country-level monitoring. It also addresses the issue of accountability, first, with regard to ensuring that data collection and national information systems can accurately measure progress in nutrition by providing high-quality, timely and disaggregated data and, second, with a discussion of national cost estimates and the tracking of resources for nutrition.
- *Compendium of indicators for nutrition-sensitive agriculture* (FAO, 2016): Is grounded in the concrete needs of programme and project officers for harmonized and reliable monitoring instruments, by providing an overview of relevant indicators, along with recommendations on how to select the most appropriate ones, according to the economic and social context.

4 Concluding remarks and resources

This guidance note aims to make the integration of nutrition more relevant and effective at national level and show UNCTs how they can best support countries to that effect. It ultimately seeks to contribute to the implementation and achievement of national and international nutrition targets and country commitments made, for example, at the Tokyo N4G Summit and UNFSS in 2021.

The UNSDCF is the main instrument for planning and implementing United Nations development activities at country level to support the 2030 Agenda. Consequently, including nutrition throughout the United Nations Cooperation Framework cycle creates opportunities to achieve all aspects of the SDGs. The presence of nutrition objectives in the UNSDCF further facilitates the development of nutrition-related joint programmes in line with national nutrition priorities. Integrating nutrition through the United Nations Cooperation Framework thereby leads to the inclusion of nutrition-related projects to their best effect in the individual programmes of United Nations agencies.

In moving the nutrition agenda forward, UNCTs should also align with the work programme of the Nutrition Decade (see Annex B for more details) and take full advantage of mechanisms to design and implement SMART commitments for nutrition.

The guidance note outlines entry points across the United Nations Cooperation Framework cycle and provides links to nutrition-related publications, country profiles, tools and guidance that can be helpful in each of its four phases. Below is a list of additional materials that will allow users to explore related content in greater detail.

TO GAIN A RAPID UNDERSTANDING OF NUTRITION ISSUES CRITICAL TO THE PARTNER COUNTRY

- [Global Nutrition Report](#) commitment tracker and country profiles (yearly updates) (Development Initiatives, n.d.)
- National Human Development Reports
- [Global Action Plan on Child Wasting](#) (WHO, 2020a)
- [State of the World's Children](#) (yearly updates) (UNICEF, 2021a)
- [Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates](#) (yearly updates) (UNICEF, WHO and World Bank, 2021)
- [Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys](#) (UNICEF, n.d.)
- [Demographic health surveys](#) (USAID, n.d.)
- [Country nutrition profiles](#) (World Bank, n.d.)
- Joint development partners national nutrition and food security bulletins and/or common nutrition narratives
- Nutrition-related vulnerability assessment and analysis by regional commissions and development banks
- [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#), which includes nutrition statistics and analysis (since 2017) (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP & WHO, 2020; 2021)
- [Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Index](#) (HANCI): ranking governments on their political commitment to tackling hunger and undernutrition (HANCI, n.d.)

- Outputs of UN-Nutrition [analytical exercises](#), such as the [UN-Nutrition Inventory](#) and [Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping](#) exercises
- Nutrition situation reports, such as [Fill the Nutrient Gap](#) (WFP, 2020b)
- [Nutrition-sensitive value chains: A guide for project design](#) (IFAD, 2018a; 2018b)
- To understand and consider the interlinkages between climate change and nutrition: [Food system interventions with climate change and nutrition co-benefits: A literature review](#) (Bakker *et al.*, 2021)
- To understand the connection between agrobiodiversity and enhanced nutrition: [Supporting Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture through Neglected and Underutilized Species](#) (Padulosi, Roy and Rosado-May, 2019)

TO GAIN A RAPID UNDERSTANDING OF NATIONAL NUTRITION PRIORITIES

- Multi-sectoral nutrition plans, including national nutrition strategic plans of action
- [Comprehensive Implementation Plan on Maternal and Infant and Young Child Nutrition](#) (WHO, 2014b)
- [Global Data Base on the Implementation of Nutrition Actions](#) (GINA) (WHO, 2019)

TO GAIN A RAPID UNDERSTANDING OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NUTRITION COMMITMENTS

- [WHA Global Nutrition Targets 2025](#) (WHO, 2014)
- Commitments made at the [Tokyo N4G summit](#) in 2021
- [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) (UNDESA, n.d.)
- ICN2 political outcome documents: [Rome Declaration on Nutrition](#) (FAO and WHO, 2014)
- [Work Programme of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition \(2016–2025\)](#) (FAO and WHO, 2016)
- [Commitments made at the 2021 Food Systems Summit](#) (UNFSS, n.d.)
- [Compendium of indicators for nutrition-sensitive agriculture](#) (FAO, 2016)

TO UNDERSTAND HOW NUTRITION ISSUES TIE IN WITH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

- National agriculture and food security policies, strategies and plans
- National health policies and plans of action – with a focus on the nutrition-specific elements
- National education policies and plan of action
- National commitments made within the framework of the Nutrition Decade
- Sub-national development plans and other key sectoral development plans (such as gender)
- National development plans or poverty reduction strategies
- National sustainable development strategies
- National emergency management and disaster response preparedness plans
- National reports on adolescents, youth, gender equality, human rights

Annexes

A. Nutrition’s relationship to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals

The Global Nutrition Report produced a helpful briefing on “driving progress on the SDGs through better nutrition” (Venkatesh Mannar and Fanzo, 2019). Alongside the briefing, the following infographic is useful for charting how nutrition relates to all 17 SDGs as a maker and marker of development.

Figure A1.
Leveraging the power of nutrition to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals



Source: World Food Programme in its capacity as host agency of the UN Network for SUN/REACH Secretariat. 2020. Nutrition and the Sustainable Development Goals [infographic]. Rome.

B. Country-specific SMART commitments

A common vision on global action to eradicate hunger and end all forms of malnutrition was set out in the ten commitments of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the accompanying 60 recommended policy options and strategies of its Framework for Action, adopted at ICN2 in November 2014. Building on these, the United Nations General Assembly declared the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) in April 2016.

The ten commitments are:

1. Eradicate hunger and prevent all forms of malnutrition.
2. Increase investments for effective interventions and actions to improve people's diets and nutrition.
3. Enhance sustainable food systems.
4. Raise the profile of nutrition with national strategies and align national resources accordingly.
5. Strengthen human and institutional capacities to improve nutrition.
6. Strengthen and facilitate contributions and action by all stakeholders.
7. Ensure healthy diets throughout the life course.
8. Create enabling environment for making informed choices.
9. Implement these ten commitments through the Framework for Action.
10. Integrate the Declaration's vision and commitments into the post-2015 development agenda process.

As part of the Nutrition Decade and ICN2 follow-up process, there is a call for governments and all actors to make SMART commitments to nutrition action to achieve national nutrition targets. This also requires monitoring systems to be put in place that permit the assessment of progress. There is also a call on all relevant actors to revise or extend SMART and ambitious commitments as part of the [2021 Tokyo N4G Summit](#). The new commitments are recorded and tracked, and remain publicly available through the [Global Nutrition Report's](#) Nutrition Accountability Framework, which monitors all nutrition commitments, including N4G commitments. The United Nations System has a role in assisting countries in translating the 60 recommended actions of the ICN2 Framework for Action into country-specific SMART commitments for action on nutrition. UN-Nutrition member agencies will also help countries to translate existing commitments into concrete action and results at country level. One particularly practical form of guidance, [Strengthening Nutrition Action](#), focuses on the policy recommendations of ICN2 (FAO, 2018). This resource provides practical recommendations while taking into account that country-specific policy commitments to action will vary based on national priorities and each country's nutritional situation and food and health systems issues.

The implementation of the ten commitments of the Rome Declaration through the ICN2 Framework for Action also helps to ensure accountability and the monitoring of progress on achieving the 2025 WHA global nutrition targets and the nutrition-related voluntary global non-communicable diseases targets. The Nutrition Decade offers a unique opportunity to all countries and stakeholders to unite around a common framework and to increase the visibility, coordination, efficiency and effectiveness of nutrition action at all levels worldwide.

Abbreviations and acronyms

CAN	Compendium of Actions for Nutrition
CCA	common country analysis
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HANCI	Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Index
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MODA	Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis
NCD	non-communicable disease
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound
SPRING	Strengthening Partnerships, Results and Innovations Globally
UNCT	United Nations country team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFSS	United Nations Food Systems Summit
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCN	United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
WFP	World Food Programme
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization



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