



Rome-based Agencies (RBA) collaboration on nutrition-sensitive value chains

Sustainable FOOD VALUE CHAINS for Nutrition

To grow and lead productive lives we need good nutrition, and good nutrition starts from what we eat. Food systems have great potential to make diverse and nutritious food available and affordable to all. To do that, however, there is a need to strengthen the focus not only on how food is produced, but also how it is processed, distributed, marketed and delivered to consumers, the series of activities that together comprise a value chain (VC).

A VC approach is emerging as a useful way to analyse and navigate the complexity of the food system to improve food security and nutrition outcomes. Such an approach can help to identify entry points for policy interventions, investment decisions and capacity development. Though the traditional focus of VC development has been on increasing economic value, nutrition-sensitive value chains (NSVCs) leverage opportunities to enhance nutrition value as well, increasing supply and demand for safe and diverse food, and adding nutrition value, or minimizing nutrition losses.

ROME-BASED AGENCIES (RBA) WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD VALUE CHAINS FOR NUTRITION

Collaboration among UN Agencies, both at global and country levels, is crucial to achieving a food system which delivers diverse and nutritious foods for a hunger-free world. Having identified NSVCs as a key area of collaboration, the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) formed a Working Group on Sustainable Food Value Chains for Nutrition, bringing together FAO, IFAD and WFP, along with Bioversity International and IFPRI. The Group was created to undertake joint actions in the area of NSVCs, including support to investment and policy processes, capacity development, generation of knowledge products, harmonized tools and guidance, and joint advocacy, all in the context of country-led processes and international policy fora.

RBA WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES IN 2016 AND 2017

a) Development of a framework on nutrition-sensitive value chains (NSVC)

- Drawing on existing VC approaches, including those for NSVCs¹, an analytical framework for NSVC project design was developed (Figure 1). The framework was adopted by the RBAs as a common approach that could guide the efforts of the different agencies in mainstreaming nutrition into VC projects. The NSVC framework is a shift from the traditional VC approach, which focuses on supply opportunities and market demands, to one that starts from understanding nutrition needs of consumers.

The NSVC framework starts by identifying the nutrition problem and relating it to food consumption patterns and dietary quality. Specific food commodities can then be identified as having promising potential to address the nutrition problem. Additional analyses can then be undertaken to determine how to shape value chains for these commodities to be nutrition sensitive, specifically by mapping the constraints in the demand and/or supply of specific foods. It is particularly important to consider the development of value chains for multiple commodities so that together they can create a healthier food system.

Based on these analyses, the framework proposes three possible strategies to make VC more nutrition-sensitive: increase 1) supply and 2) demand for safe and diverse food and 3) add nutrition value/minimize nutrition losses all along the value chain. It also maps out a range of entry points for each one of these strategies (Figure 1).

Bringing a nutrition lens to value chains provides rich opportunities to make a diverse, stable supply of nutritious food available, affordable and acceptable for nutritionally vulnerable populations

b) Dissemination and validation of the NSVC framework

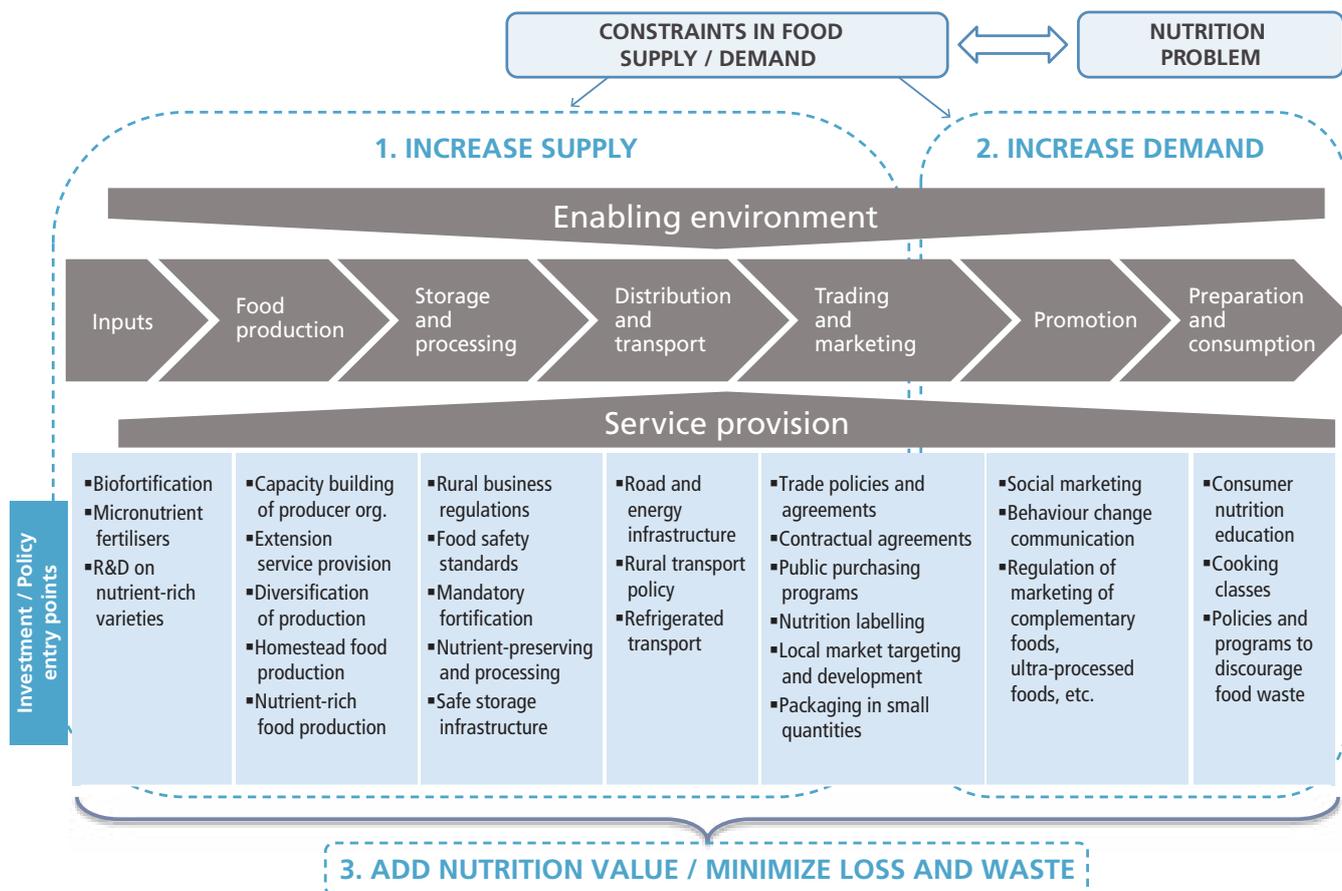
- The Working Group organized a Special Event during the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Plenary Meeting held in Rome in October 2016. The NSVC framework, with heightened attention to sustainability and inclusivity, was presented and a summary background document was published.² The framework was also presented at the UN Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Value Chain Development, also held in Rome in October 2016 and at the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition event on Trade and Nutrition, held in Rome in June 2016.

¹ De la Peña, I., Garrett, J. & Gelli, A. (forthcoming). *Nutrition-sensitive value chains from a smallholder perspective: A framework for project design*. IFAD, Rome. The framework draws on, among others, Gelli, A., Hawkes, C., Donovan, J., Harris, J., Allen, S.L., De Brauw, A., Henson, S., Johnson, N., Garrett, J. & Ryckembusch, D. 2015. *Value chains and nutrition: A framework to support the identification, design, and evaluation of interventions*. IFPRI Discussion Paper 01413, Washington DC.

² See FAO Committee on World Food Security. 2016. *Inclusive Value Chains for Sustainable Agriculture and Scaled up Food Security and Nutrition Outcomes – Background Document*. September. CFS 2016/43/INF/21. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mr587e.pdf>

FIGURE 1

Nutrition-sensitive value chain framework, strategies and potential interventions



Source: De la Peña, I., Garrett, J. & Gelli, A. (forthcoming). *Nutrition-sensitive value chains from a smallholder perspective: A framework for project design*. IFAD, Rome.

- In March 2017, the WG organized an on-line consultation through the Food Security and Nutrition Forum (FSN Forum).³ The consultation allowed broader dissemination of the framework among development practitioners and researchers, and solicited feedback from them on the relevance of the framework. Participants confirmed the basic approach implicit in the framework, highlighted the multiple opportunities for increasing nutrition at different stages of the VC and shared case studies and good practices. Key messages shared by the participants include: the importance of diversity and hence consideration of multiple VCs, the need to pay attention to indigenous knowledge and environmental sustainability, the importance of situating the framework in the context of local food systems of developing countries where informality is prominent, the centrality of women’s empowerment for VC and nutrition, the key role played by cooperatives and the need to manage risks linked to private sector involvement. Participants cited numerous challenges to development of NSVCs, spanning from lack of capacity of stakeholders to the difficulty of ensuring that value chains are both nutrition sensitive and economically viable.

³ Proceedings, background documents, and summary are available at the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition website for this discussion. <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/NSVC>

THE WAY FORWARD FOR RBA COLLABORATION ON NSVC

- By the end of 2017 a guide on how to design NSVC projects for smallholders will be available. Developed by IFAD and field-tested in Nigeria and Indonesia, the guide as well as the approach, methods and tools used during the field testing have been discussed and validated through technical consultations at country as well as global level.
- FAO is leading the development of a joint RBA e-learning module on NSVCs, based on the forthcoming IFAD guide, FAO's Sustainable Food Value Chain Framework and on the experience of the agencies.
- The RBAs will seek to partner with governments, development agencies, and others to facilitate development of NSVCs at country level. Collaboration around institutional procurement for healthy diets and development of gender-sensitive VCs constitute promising opportunities to bring together the technical knowledge, finance, and logistical support that the RBAs can provide.
- Under WFP leadership, by the end of 2017 a Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) Resource Framework will be published. The Resource Framework harmonizes the existing knowledge and tools, builds on the wealth of expertise of the partners on HGSF and further fosters partnerships to help Governments achieve their goals.



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