



IFAD  
**ACTION**  
PLAN  
**NUTRITION**

 2019-2025

# **Mainstreaming nutrition in IFAD**

**Action Plan 2019-2025**

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| A4NH   | Agriculture for Nutrition and Health                       |
| APR    | Asia and the Pacific Division                              |
| CD     | country director   |
| CFS    | Committee on World Food Security                           |
| COSOP  | country strategic opportunities programme                  |
| CPM    | country programme manager                                  |
| CSN    | country strategy note                                      |
| ECG    | Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division |
| ESA    | East and Southern Africa Division                          |
| FAO    | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations    |
| ICO    | IFAD country office  |
| IFAD9  | Ninth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources                    |
| IFAD10 | Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources                    |
| IFAD11 | Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources                 |
| IFAD12 | Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources                  |
| IFNA   | Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa       |
| LAC    | Latin America and the Caribbean Division                   |
| M&E    | monitoring and evaluation                                  |
| MTR    | mid-term review  |
| NAP    | Nutrition Action Plan                                      |
| NEN    | Near East, North Africa and Europe Division                |
| NEPAD  | New Partnership for Africa's Development                   |
| ORMS   | Operational Results Management System                      |
| PDR    | project design report                                      |
| PMD    | Programme Management Department                            |
| PMI    | Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division  |
| PRM    | Partnership and Resource Mobilization Office               |
| PTL    | project technical lead                                     |
| RBAs   | Rome-based agencies  |
| REACH  | Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and undernutrition    |
| RIDE   | Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness                 |
| RIMS   | Results and Impact Management System                       |
| RMF    | results management framework                               |
| SDG    | Sustainable Development Goal                               |
| SKD    | Strategy and Knowledge Department                          |
| SUN    | Scaling Up Nutrition Movement                              |
| UNSCN  | United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition      |
| WCA    | West and Central Africa Division                           |
| WFP    | World Food Programme                                       |
| WHO    | World Health Organization                                  |

# **Mainstreaming Nutrition in IFAD: Nutrition Action Plan 2019-2025**

## **Executive summary**

### **Introduction and context**

After years of steady progress towards zero hunger, chronic undernutrition is on the rise. According to a recent report from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the number of hungry people rose to 821 million in 2017, up from 815 million one year earlier.<sup>1</sup> This, in turn, was an increase from 777 million in 2015. The period also saw a slower decline in the prevalence of chronic child undernutrition or stunting, affecting 22.2 per cent of children under the age of five (151 million children).<sup>2</sup> This reversal is threatening to put the second Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of “zero hunger” out of reach – and since the SDGs are all inextricably linked, it risks setting others back as well.

This Nutrition Action Plan (NAP) 2019-2025 sets out the framework to guide IFAD’s actions to accelerate mainstreaming of nutrition into its investments. It has been developed in a highly participatory and consultative manner, involving IFAD staff (at headquarters and IFAD country offices/hubs), as well as key partners and IFAD Executive Board representatives.

Building on achievements and lessons learned from IFAD’s first Nutrition Action Plan (2016-2018), this NAP deepens IFAD’s commitments to nutrition mainstreaming while leveraging the organization’s comparative advantage. Revision of the NAP 2016-2018 was carried out with the objective of aligning it with the new IFAD11 target of mainstreaming nutrition into 50 per cent of projects at design, capturing lessons learned to date in order to accelerate nutrition mainstreaming during IFAD11 and IFAD12, and building on opportunities created by IFAD’s decentralization and restructuring.

IFAD plays a unique role among development actors committed to improving nutrition, given its dual nature as a United Nations specialized agency in smallholder agriculture and rural development, and as an international financial institution that can provide governments with the finance needed to make lasting and effective investments in nutrition.

As a people-centred organization, IFAD’s comparative advantage is that it specifically targets the poor and most vulnerable households in rural areas (including women, children, youth – in particular adolescent girls – and indigenous peoples). Effective targeting of these nutritionally vulnerable groups is essential for achieving nutrition results while “leaving no one behind”.

By investing in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems, IFAD aims to improve the quality of the diet of its beneficiary rural populations. IFAD’s primary objective is to ensure that acceptable, diverse, nutritious and safe foods, adequate to meet the dietary needs of people of all ages, are available and affordable at all times. Although IFAD has traditionally focused on undernutrition, improving dietary quality

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<sup>1</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018. Building climate resilience for food security and nutrition* (Rome: FAO, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF, WHO and World Bank Group, *Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates* (2018 edition).

allows IFAD to address all forms of malnutrition (including micronutrient deficiencies and overweight/obesity).

### **Nutrition mainstreaming in IFAD**

This NAP 2019-2025 builds on progress on nutrition mainstreaming to date. At present, nutrition is firmly embedded in IFAD's corporate strategies and commitments. Recognizing that undernutrition compromises rural people's ability to emerge from poverty and contribute to the vibrant rural transformation that IFAD seeks to promote, nutrition has been placed at the centre of IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025, specifically under Strategic Objective 1: "Increase poor rural people's productive capacities". Nutrition has also been integrated into the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD11) in its results management framework and commitment matrix, and has become increasingly featured in the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE).

As of now, IFAD has surpassed its commitment under IFAD10 (2016-2018) to ensure that 100 per cent of its country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) and 33 per cent of new projects are nutrition-sensitive. A system to categorize projects and COSOPs as nutrition-sensitive has been developed, helping to track commitments.

In IFAD10 IFAD strengthened the measurement of nutrition results. Mandatory output- and outcome-level nutrition indicators are now incorporated in the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS) for nutrition-sensitive projects. A nutrition rating has been incorporated into project supervision and mid-term review guidelines to systematically monitor progress during implementation.

In terms of project-level investments, a review of project design reports (PDRs) approved between 2010 and 2017 showed that nutrition mainstreaming has steadily increased since 2010 across the portfolio, albeit with differences between regions. Within this period, most nutrition-sensitive projects invested in improvement of local food systems (mainly through increasing and diversifying food production), in nutrition education and behaviour change communication, and in empowerment of women in ways that improve nutrition for themselves and their families.

The review of PDRs revealed, however, that there is scope for increasing investments in the following domains: (i) investing in a wider range of nutrient-rich foods; (ii) integrating nutrition considerations into stages of the food value chain beyond production; (iii) further exploring the linkages between environment, climate and nutrition; (iv) increasing investments in water, sanitation and hygiene; and (v) strengthening nutrition-related policy dialogue and coordination with sectors outside agriculture.

The experience of implementing the first NAP generated important lessons, including: the crucial role of supplementary funds as a driver for mainstreaming; the need to intensify efforts in building implementation capacity; and the importance of improved knowledge management practices.

NAP 2019-2025 will optimize the opportunities presented by IFAD's decentralization for closer support to operations, partnership-building and policy engagement, and for systematically analysing and addressing in an integrated manner the mainstreaming themes (namely environment and climate, gender, youth and nutrition).

## **IFAD's Nutrition Action Plan 2019-2025**

The theory of change for nutrition-sensitive investments illustrates the impact pathways through which IFAD-funded projects contribute to improved nutrition. Based on an analysis of nutrition problems, IFAD's investments aim to achieve a set of nutrition-relevant outcomes that contribute overall to two main project-level results: diverse, nutritious and safe diets and – to a lesser extent – improved health.

The NAP's results framework is made up of four levels. At the global level, IFAD's investments in nutrition contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, directly through the second SDG ("Ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture"). In relation to IFAD's Strategic Framework, nutrition investments contribute to IFAD's Strategic Objective 1: "Increase poor rural people's productive capacities".

In relation to development results, IFAD has committed to improving the nutrition of 12 million people by 2021. This target will be measured through impact assessments of selected projects in terms of improved diets. By 2025, the target is expected to rise at a minimum to 13.2 million people with improved nutrition. The 2025 target is tentative, to be revised and adjusted based on the results achieved by 2021.

The fourth level of the results framework corresponds to the overall objective of this Action Plan: to improve the contribution to nutrition by IFAD's investments. This objective will be measured through the following three key performance indicators:

- One hundred per cent of COSOPs are nutrition-sensitive. A nutrition-sensitive COSOP includes a nutrition situation assessment and specifies how the COSOP's strategic objectives relate to nutrition.
- Fifty per cent of new projects are nutrition-sensitive by 2021. A nutrition-sensitive project has explicit nutrition objectives, activities and indicators. This target will be raised to 60 per cent by 2025. The 2025 target is tentative, to be revised and adjusted based on the results achieved by 2021.
- By 2025, 50 per cent of ongoing projects obtain a performance score of 4 (moderately satisfactory) or above on nutrition at the project's mid-term review.

IFAD will work through five mutually supportive action areas to achieve the objective of NAP 2019-2025: (i) designing nutrition-sensitive COSOPs and projects; (ii) implementation capacity; (iii) policy influence, engagement and partnerships; (iv) knowledge, communications and evidence; and (v) human and financial resources. The NAP defines outputs and indicators for each of these action areas (see table 1).

Table 1

**Outputs and indicators per action area**

| <b>Action area 1: Designing nutrition-sensitive COSOPs and projects</b>   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>  |
| COSOPs and projects systematically take into account how they can improve the nutritional outcomes of beneficiary populations.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One hundred per cent of results-based COSOPs and country strategy notes (CSNs) are nutrition-sensitive.</li> <li>• Fifty per cent of new projects designed are nutrition-sensitive in 2021, 60 percent by 2025.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>   |
| <b>Action area 2: Implementation capacity</b>   |   |
| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>  |
| Strengthening of the technical, analytical and managerial capacity of project management teams and partners (government institutions, private sector, NGOs and rural institutions) to implement nutrition-sensitive projects.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of persons provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• By 2025, 50 per cent of ongoing nutrition-sensitive projects obtain a performance score of 4 (moderately satisfactory) or above on nutrition in project mid-term reviews.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• By 2025, 50 per cent of ongoing nutrition-sensitive projects that are rated on nutrition obtain a performance score of 4 (moderately satisfactory) or above during project supervision.</li> <li>• At least one training event is carried out each year for implementing partners on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Action area 3: Policy influence, engagement and partnerships</b>   |   |
| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>  |
| IFAD is engaged in country, regional and global policy-influencing platforms and is leading in advocating for the role of food systems and agriculture in addressing problems of malnutrition, as well as on the role of smallholders in the world's food and nutrition security. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2025, at least five concrete nutrition-related policy deliverables that enhance an enabling environment for nutrition are produced through national, regional and global bodies (policy papers, joint advocacy, events, media briefings).</li> <li>• At least five national, regional and global nutrition-related policy-influencing events that enhance IFAD's visibility are held each year (presenting, facilitating, chairing, hosting).</li> <li>• At least five strategic partnerships are developed and/or maintained by 2025.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Action area 4: Knowledge, communications and evidence</b>  |   |
| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>  |
| Improved generation, packaging, dissemination and use of evidence on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2025, 75 per cent of nutrition-sensitive projects reporting on at least one core nutrition indicator.</li> <li>• Each year, at least one strategic knowledge product developed and being used to guide nutrition-sensitive</li> </ul>   |

<sup>3</sup> The 2025 target is tentative, to be revised and adjusted based on the results achieved by 2021 and the resources mobilized in IFAD12 replenishment consultations.

<sup>4</sup> RIMS output indicator.

<sup>5</sup> The performance ratings will be applied to all projects at MTR.



|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>project design, implementation, monitoring/evaluation and policy engagement (toolkits, How to Do Notes, videos).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A dissemination strategy promoting the uptake of research and other knowledge products is developed and implemented by 2025.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Action area 5: Human and financial resources</b>                |  |
| <b>Output</b>  | <b>Indicator</b>   |
| Resources secured to mainstream nutrition within IFAD investments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional resources are mobilized in support of IFAD's nutrition mainstreaming.</li> <li>• Roster of nutrition consultants is in place by 2021 and regularly updated.</li> <li>• Each year at least one nutrition awareness session organized for IFAD staff at headquarters and in at least one hub.</li> </ul> |

## I. Introduction

Nutrition is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The second Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 2) sets the ambitious target of “ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture”, while recognizing the essential role sustainable food systems play. Additionally, nutrition is recognized as an essential input in achieving each and every SDG.

After years of steady progress towards zero hunger, chronic undernutrition is on the rise. According to a recent report from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the number of hungry people rose to 821 million in 2017, up from 815 million one year earlier. This, in turn, was an increase from 777 million in 2015. The period also saw a slower decline in the prevalence of chronic child undernutrition or stunting, affecting 22.2 per cent of children under the age of five (151 million children).<sup>6</sup> This reversal is threatening to put the second SDG of “zero hunger” out of reach – and since the SDGs are all inextricably linked, it risks setting others back as well.

“Improving the nutritional level of the poorest populations in developing countries” is a principal objective of the Agreement Establishing IFAD. IFAD’s approach to nutrition mainstreaming primarily entails promoting investments in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems targeting smallholder producers, who are crucial to the world’s food security and nutrition. Beyond agriculture, IFAD also optimizes the contribution of rural development to nutrition outcomes.

The Nutrition Action Plan 2016-2018 has guided IFAD’s efforts during the IFAD10 replenishment period, providing strategic guidance and a clear road map for achievement of the targets that have been set for mainstreaming nutrition (see table 2), in a way that aligns with IFAD’s mandate and comparative advantage.

Supplementary funding from the Governments of Canada and Germany has played a key role in implementation of the NAP 2016-2018, which included setting up a systematic process for mainstreaming nutrition, building the capacities of staff and implementing partners, and carrying out innovative research to position IFAD as one of the leading agencies in nutrition-sensitive agriculture. With nutrition now embedded in IFAD’s corporate commitments and strategies, and with a significant portfolio of ongoing nutrition-sensitive investments, it is time to step up and consolidate these efforts.

This revised NAP (2019-2025) sets out the framework that is to guide IFAD’s actions to accelerate nutrition mainstreaming and achieve its ambitious commitments on nutrition (see table 2 for IFAD11 commitments). It specifies how IFAD will mainstream nutrition across the organization’s programme of loans and grants and its non-lending areas. Revision of the NAP 2016-2018 was carried out with the objective of aligning it with the new IFAD11 target of mainstreaming nutrition into 50 per cent of projects at design and of capturing lessons learned to date in order to accelerate nutrition mainstreaming during IFAD11 and IFAD12. It also looked to build on opportunities created by IFAD’s decentralization and restructuring.

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<sup>6</sup> UNICEF, WHO and World Bank Group, *Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates* (2018 edition).

Table 2

**IFAD commitments on nutrition**

| <i>Commitment</i>  | <i>Description</i>   |
|--------------------|--|
| IFAD11 commitments | Review of Action Plan in mid-2018;<br>Increase target for nutrition-sensitive projects at design to 50 per cent;<br>Add nutrition impact indicator to results management framework: 12 million people with improved nutrition;<br>Mobilize unrestricted complementary contributions for nutrition. |
| IFAD10 commitments | One hundred per cent of COSOPs are nutrition-sensitive;<br>Thirty-three per cent of projects are nutrition-sensitive at design;<br>Develop a Nutrition Action Plan 2016-2018   |

This NAP 2019-2025 has been developed in a highly participatory and consultative manner. It started with a review of the NAP 2016-2018, including consultations with selected IFAD staff (headquarters and IFAD country offices) and key partners. After development of the first draft Action Plan, further consultations were conducted with key IFAD divisions – the Programme Management Department (PMD); regional divisions; the Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division (ECG); the Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division (PMI); the Partnership and Resource Mobilization Office (PRM); and the Communications Division (COM). This was followed by informal consultations with IFAD Executive Board representatives (see annex 3 for the list of people consulted).

Revision of the NAP 2016-2018 was an iterative process that was informed by the following inputs, among others: a mid-term progress report to the Government of Canada (mid-2017); the 2017 corporate portfolio stock-taking, which focused on nutrition; an analysis of nutrition-sensitive COSOPs and PDRs (2010-2017); and assessment of IFAD staff capacity. All of these have been instrumental in identifying the drivers of performance in nutrition mainstreaming and the factors hindering progress – at country, regional and global levels.

This NAP is conceived as a corporate-wide responsibility, intended for use by multiple divisions responsible for its implementation, as well as by partners supporting IFAD's operations – including government implementing agencies, Executive Board Member States and the international development community.

## **II. The context**

### **A. The nutrition problem: a global challenge**

The Rome Declaration on Nutrition, developed during the Second International Conference on Nutrition in 2014, commits countries to eradicate hunger and prevent malnutrition in all its forms worldwide, highlighting the critical role of agriculture and food systems. In 2016, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), which provides a unique and time-bound opportunity for collaboration and coordination among stakeholders across different complementary sectors, such as education, health and agriculture. Global policy forums like the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) have also strengthened the focus on nutrition, in particular the role of food systems in ensuring access to healthy diets.

Nutrition is also rising as a priority for many governments. As of today, 60 countries and states have joined the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (SUN), showing their commitment to placing nutrition high on their political agenda. The SUN movement – a multisector and multi-stakeholder platform for coordination of nutrition actions – promotes a multisectoral approach to addressing all forms of malnutrition, recognizing the role that different sectors play in this, including agriculture.

Governments are increasingly understanding that investing in nutrition is central to a healthy and well-functioning society and to increasing economic productivity. At the aggregate level, undernutrition can lead to economic losses that vary by country from 2 to 16 per cent of GDP,<sup>7</sup> particularly in terms of health and education costs and productivity losses. Preventing malnutrition is a smarter investment than treating its consequences. Good nutrition gives people more productive and cognitive capacity, offering a US\$16 return for every US\$1 invested.<sup>8</sup> At the individual level, undernutrition in the early stages of life has irreversible consequences for a child’s cognitive and physical development, reducing school performance, productive capacity and lifetime ability to earn by 10 per cent. The impact is multi-generational, as undernourished mothers have a higher likelihood of giving birth to stunted babies.

All three aspects of the triple burden of malnutrition (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight/obesity) often coexist within the same country, household or individual.

Chronic child undernutrition (stunting) affects 151 million children worldwide, with significant regional differences (see table 3) as well as urban-rural differences. Evidence shows that the number of stunted children in rural areas is at least two times the number in urban areas.<sup>9</sup>

Table 3  
**Level of stunting, wasting and overweight per region**  
(number of children under five)

| Form of child malnutrition | Latin America and the Caribbean | Africa       | Asia         | Oceania     |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Stunting</b>            | 5.1 million                     | 58.7 million | 83.6 million | 0.5 million |
| <b>Wasting</b>             | 0.7 million                     | 13.8 million | 35.0 million | 0.1 million |
| <b>Overweight</b>          | 3.9 million                     | 9.7 million  | 17.5 million | 0.1 million |

Source: UNICEF, WHO and World Bank Group, *Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates* (2018).

More than two billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies (lacking vital micronutrients such as vitamin A, iron, iodine and zinc), affecting their health, productivity and life expectancy.<sup>10</sup>

A shift in dietary patterns and lifestyles caused by urbanization, globalization and economic growth is leading to increasing rates of overweight and obesity, which are closely associated with non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Overweight and obesity affect nearly two billion adults worldwide and are rising in every region of the world, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where the rate of increase is greater in rural areas than in urban areas.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> African Union Commission, NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and United Nations World Food Programme, *The cost of hunger in Africa: Social and economic impact of child undernutrition in Egypt, Ethiopia, Swaziland and Uganda* (Addis Ababa: UNECA, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Development Initiatives, *Global Nutrition Report 2017: Nourishing the SDGs* (Bristol: Development Initiatives, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Paciorek, Christopher J., et al. "Children’s height and weight in rural and urban populations in low-income and middle-income countries: A systematic analysis of population-representative data," *Lancet Global Health* 1, no. 5 (2013): e300-309; DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(13\)70109-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(13)70109-8). The urban-rural difference is largest in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras and Peru), some African countries (such as Burkina Faso, Burundi and Niger), and in China and Viet Nam in Asia.

<sup>10</sup> World Health Organization, *Guidelines on food fortification with micronutrients* (Geneva: WHO, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> WHO. *Global Health Observatory (GHO) data. Overweight and Obesity, Adults Aged 18+*. Available at: [www.who.int/gho/ncd/risk\\_factors/overweight\\_text/en](http://www.who.int/gho/ncd/risk_factors/overweight_text/en); Jaacks, L. M., M. M. Slining

All forms of malnutrition are associated with poor diets. They currently represent the number one risk factor in the global burden of disease, posing a greater risk than the combined risks of unsafe sex and alcohol, drug and tobacco use.<sup>12</sup> Healthy diets are thus essential to preventing malnutrition in all its forms.

In this context, investments in agriculture and food systems have been globally recognized as playing a unique and irreplaceable role in improving nutrition, by ensuring access to a diverse set of foods that compose a balanced and healthy diet.

## **B. IFAD's contribution to global efforts**

IFAD plays a unique role among development actors committed to improving nutrition, given its dual nature as a United Nations specialized agency and an international financial institution. IFAD combines solid technical knowledge with the provision of the finance that governments need to make lasting and effective investments in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems.

Recognizing the central role of nutrition in enabling sustainable and inclusive rural transformation, IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025 envisions nutrition as fundamental for increasing poor rural people's productive capacities (Strategic Objective 1) and rural households' resilience. Fundamentally, undernourished infants and young children will never reach their full physical and intellectual potential and are more prone to diseases. Research shows that adults who suffered from stunting as children are less productive than non-stunted workers and are less able to contribute to the economy. Undernutrition therefore compromises rural people's ability to overcome poverty and contribute to the vibrant rural transformation that IFAD seeks to promote.<sup>13</sup>

Malnutrition is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. IFAD's contribution to addressing the global nutrition challenge must build on the organization's strengths and comparative advantage. IFAD therefore adopts a people-centred approach to nutrition mainstreaming, with the objective of shaping food systems for healthy diets and optimizing the contribution to nutrition of rural development interventions.

As a people-centred organization, IFAD's comparative advantage is that it specifically targets the poor and most vulnerable households in rural areas. This makes it possible to reach nutritionally vulnerable groups (including women, children, youth – in particular adolescent girls – and indigenous peoples), specifically those living in rural areas, where all forms of malnutrition are more prevalent. Targeting these groups effectively is essential for achieving nutrition results while "leaving no one behind".

By investing in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems, IFAD aims to improve the quality of the diet of rural populations. IFAD's primary objective is to ensure that acceptable, diverse, nutritious and safe foods – adequate to meet the dietary needs of people of all ages – are available and affordable at all times. Although IFAD has traditionally focused on undernutrition, improving dietary quality allows IFAD to address all forms of malnutrition. IFAD also aims to optimize the contribution to nutrition of its broader investments in rural development. By shaping rural people's capacities in nutrition, IFAD aims to enable the poor to make the right informed choices in terms of food production, purchases and consumption.

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and B. M. Popkin, "Recent underweight and overweight trends by rural-urban residence among women in low- and middle-income countries," *Journal of Nutrition*, 145, no. 2 (2015): 352-7.

<sup>12</sup> Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, *Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21st century* (London, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Africa Union and World Food Programme, *Cost of Hunger* report.

Additionally, IFAD's lead role in the operationalization of gender and social inclusion concerns in rural development helps to ensure that nutrition mainstreaming is inclusive and gender-sensitive. IFAD's strong focus on natural resource management and climate resilience ensures that investments in nutrition-sensitive agriculture are also environmentally sustainable.

At the global level, IFAD is increasingly active in advocating for the role of smallholder producers in food security and nutrition. It actively participates in and contributes to food security and nutrition policy forums and platforms, including the Committee on World Food Security, the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN, currently chaired by IFAD's Vice-President), and the United Nations network for Scaling Up Nutrition. IFAD is also engaging in regional platforms, such as the Japan-led Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa (IFNA) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Efforts are under way to strengthen engagement in other regions (Asia and Latin America). IFAD was the first United Nations agency to formulate specific commitments in support of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025).<sup>14</sup> IFAD also contributes to global knowledge through the Global Nutrition Report (GNR), the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report, the Rural Development Report and the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition.

### **III. Nutrition mainstreaming in IFAD**

#### **A. Achievements to date**

A major milestone in the IFAD10 nutrition commitments was the preparation of NAP 2016-2018. It has not only provided a road map for mainstreaming nutrition, but also helped in its institutionalization within IFAD's corporate processes, consolidating the efforts on nutrition mainstreaming initiated in 2013 with support from the Government of Canada. A systematic process has been established, by which projects and COSOPs are reviewed and supported through nutrition technical assistance. Thanks to this process, by the end of 2018 the IFAD10 performance targets for operations (100 per cent of COSOPs and 33 per cent of new projects being nutrition-sensitive) will be achieved for COSOPs and exceeded for projects. Due to this promising trend, the new target for nutrition-sensitive projects at design has been increased to 50 per cent (IFAD11) and 60 per cent (IFAD12).<sup>15</sup>

Nutrition is also now firmly embedded in IFAD's corporate strategies and commitments. In addition to its central role in IFAD's Strategic Framework, nutrition has also been integrated into the IFAD11 results management framework and commitment matrix, and has become increasingly featured in the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness. Increased corporate attention has also led to selecting nutrition as a thematic focus of the 2017 portfolio stock-taking.

In line with IFAD's development effectiveness framework, IFAD aims to strengthen the evidence base for nutrition-sensitive investment to inform decision-making. To do this, nutrition has been adopted as one of the five main pillars of IFAD's emerging research framework, and nutrition impact indicators have been included in the results management framework (RMF).<sup>16</sup> At project level, indicators to

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<sup>14</sup> IFAD's contribution to the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition is available at <https://www.unscn.org/en/topics/un-decade-of-action-on-nutrition?idnews=1686>.

<sup>15</sup> The target of 60% is tentative, to be confirmed during the IFAD12 replenishment.

<sup>16</sup> RMF indicators for nutrition:

- Tier 1: Prevalence of food insecurity: Food Insecurity Experience Scale (SDG 2.1.2); Prevalence of stunting among children under five years of age (SDG 2.2.1); Prevalence of malnutrition: Wasting and overweight among children under five years of age (SDG 2.2.2);
- Tier 2: Number of persons provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition (RIMS output indicator).

adequately and systematically capture the contribution of agriculture to nutrition have been incorporated in the RIMS.<sup>17</sup> Progress on nutrition is also now systematically tracked during implementation, through the incorporation of a nutrition rating in the corporate guidance for supervision and mid-term reviews.

Substantial efforts devoted to strengthening capacities in nutrition among IFAD staff are bearing fruit. While previously the mainstreaming of nutrition was mostly supply-driven, a trend has been observed of increasing demand for specific technical assistance by IFAD country teams and government partners at different points in the project cycle. Besides specific seminars, workshops and events, a plan has been prepared to guide strategic efforts in capacity development. It includes an inventory of existing learning materials, an outline of courses for these audiences and recommendations on content and delivery options, including integration of learning modules into IFAD's Operations Academy.

## **B. Implications at project level**

A review of project design reports approved between 2010 and 2017 showed that nutrition mainstreaming has steadily increased since 2010 across IFAD's portfolio. There are regional differences, however: Asia and the Pacific (APR), East and Southern Africa (ESA), and West and Central Africa (WCA) have a higher share of nutrition-sensitive projects than Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and the Near East, North Africa and Europe (NEN). This variation can be explained by the differences in prevalence of various forms of malnutrition (see table 3) and the differences in the government's perception of malnutrition. For instance, LAC and NEN regions face nutrition challenges (such as rising rates of overweight and obesity) that are beyond the traditional sphere of interventions of agricultural investments. IFAD will therefore need to explore entry points and relevant interventions tailored to the wide-ranging nutrition challenges faced by different regions in the context of agriculture and food systems.

Between 2010 and 2017, most nutrition-sensitive projects invested in improvement of local food systems (mainly through increasing and diversifying food production), and in nutrition knowledge and awareness-raising (through nutrition education and behaviour change communication). Investments in gender equality and the empowerment of women in ways that improve nutrition for themselves and their families are also largely present across the portfolio.

In terms of food groups, nutrition-sensitive investments have focused on fruits and vegetables, cereals, poultry and small livestock – and to a lesser extent on legumes, nuts, roots and tubers. Despite being highly nutritious, investments in animal-sourced foods (dairy, eggs and fish) are present in few of the ongoing nutrition-sensitive projects. Hence there is scope for increasing nutrition-sensitive investments in these animal-sourced foods, while also raising awareness on the net benefit of consuming rather than only selling these nutritious foods. There is also scope for exploring the potential of non-timber forest products and neglected and underutilized species that hold potential for nutrition and are climate-resilient.

The review of PDRs also revealed opportunities for increasing investments in the following domains: (i) integrating nutrition considerations into stages of the food value chain beyond production (storage, processing, distribution, marketing, etc.), an area where efforts have been stepped up through more focused support to nutrition-sensitive value chains; (ii) further exploring the linkages between environment, climate and nutrition, where there is a clear potential for win-win

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<sup>17</sup> RIMS core indicators for nutrition:

- Output level: Number of persons provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition;
- Outcome level: Percentage of women reporting improved quality of their diets (Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women).

opportunities to deliver synergistic effects; (iii) increasing investments in water, sanitation and hygiene, which constitute the main contribution that IFAD projects can make to the health determinants of malnutrition without going beyond its mandate and scope of interventions; and (iv) strengthening nutrition-related policy dialogue and coordination with sectors outside agriculture (such as health, education and social protection) to promote a multisectoral response to malnutrition.

### C. Lessons learned and opportunities

Implementation of the NAP 2016-2018 has generated a number of lessons that will inform the new plan, which are summarized in table 4.

Table 4

#### Lessons learned

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Supplementary funds are a key driver for mainstreaming</p>                        | <p>Supplementary funds<sup>18</sup> from the Government of Canada have played an essential role in achieving the objectives of the NAP 2016-2018 and in transforming how nutrition is perceived and taken up in IFAD. In addition, the funds from the Government of Germany facilitated the undertaking of cutting-edge research to develop evidence-based guidance for the design of nutrition-sensitive value chain projects, which will allow for leveraging the potential of value chains (one of IFAD’s key areas of investments) for nutrition. IFAD will therefore need to mobilize additional supplementary funds to drive innovation and accelerate gains made in mainstreaming nutrition.</p>  |
| <p>Use every opportunity to integrate nutrition into IFAD’s investment portfolio</p> | <p>IFAD’s approach to nutrition has focused on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems in order to provide safe, affordable and nutritious foods. Even though agriculture is a key focus of IFAD’s nutrition-sensitive investments at present, there is scope for optimizing improvement in the nutrition of rural people by exploring new opportunities for mainstreaming nutrition into all of IFAD’s rural development investments, addressing social and cultural norms that hinder the food and nutrition security of rural people, and responding to emerging nutrition challenges such as overweight and obesity. Specific opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying entry points to integrate nutrition into all key IFAD investment areas (value chains, rural finance, natural resource management and community empowerment), and intensifying nutrition mainstreaming into livestock and fisheries projects;</li> <li>• identifying and optimizing linkages with other cross-cutting themes: gender, climate and environment, and youth (including adolescent girls);</li> <li>• promoting investments in water, sanitation and hygiene;</li> <li>• promoting investments in nutrient-rich foods that contribute to enhancing dietary quality for all; and</li> <li>• exploring entry points to address overweight and obesity through IFAD investments.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Strengthen targeting</p>  | <p>IFAD investments do not always develop a comprehensive targeting strategy to achieve the expected nutrition outcomes. Through the life cycle approach, there is scope for strengthening the targeting of nutritionally vulnerable groups (especially children, women of reproductive age, adolescent girls and – in some contexts – indigenous peoples) by proper identification and disaggregation of data by age and sex, and for ensuring adequate involvement of other household members with decision-making power (e.g. men).</p>   |

<sup>18</sup> Supplementary funds are given to IFAD by a donor, including non-IFAD members and non-governmental organizations, to be administered by IFAD on conditions that are mutually agreed. They are therefore not part of the IFAD core replenishment process.



|  |  |
|--|--|
| Build strong implementation capacity                   | To date IFAD's efforts in nutrition mainstreaming have focused on project design. Considering the significant number of ongoing nutrition-sensitive projects, emphasis should be placed on project implementation support, to ensure that projects realize their nutrition outcomes. This implies building adequate in-country technical, analytical and managerial capacities in nutrition and ensuring that project management structures include a nutrition focal point. Implementation support will also explore selected opportunities to retrofit nutrition into ongoing projects that are not categorized as nutrition-sensitive at design, but with potential for nutrition mainstreaming through minor budget modifications or programmatic convergence with government and/or partner programmes. |
| Strengthen corporate accountability                    | Although the NAP 2016-2018 assumed that mainstreaming nutrition was a corporate-wide responsibility, roles and accountabilities were not clearly defined or tracked. Roles and responsibilities will be clearly spelled out and staff made aware of them.  |
| Reinforce regional- and national-level policy dialogue | At the global level, IFAD has taken an active role in policy dialogue and partnerships for nutrition, but there is scope for increasing engagement at the regional and country levels by closely working with subregional hubs and IFAD country offices.   |
| Develop strategic partnerships                         | Partnerships are essential for achieving programmatic convergence and promoting policy dialogue. Scaling up and deepening existing partnerships will be an important consideration (with the Rome-based agencies, other United Nations agencies and the CGIAR research centres). Additionally, partnerships with local organizations will be crucial for supporting project implementation, policy engagement and increased public awareness.  |
| Evidence generation and dissemination                  | The rise of nutrition within the development agenda has been accompanied by an increase in knowledge products, resources and evidence to inform the understanding of what works for nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and by what means. Better organization, packaging and dissemination of existing materials is key for ensuring access and utilization by project implementers. There is also a need to better document and enhance learning and the sharing of good practices between projects and countries. Making use of the new core indicators on nutrition is an important factor in the generation of evidence.   |

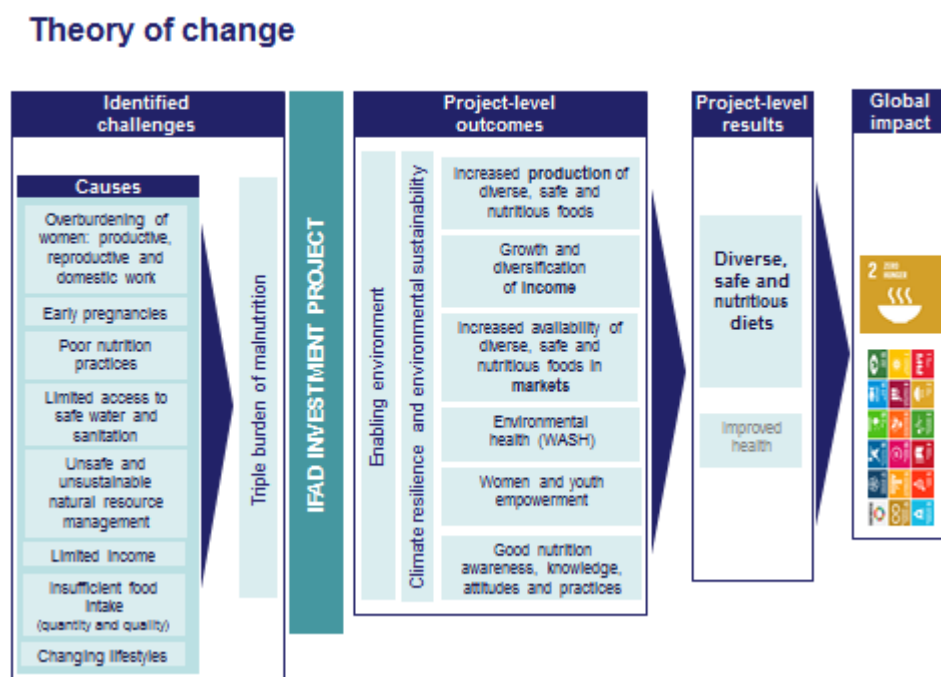
IFAD's decentralization opens opportunities for enhanced country presence, which is essential for closer support to operations, partnership-building and policy engagement at the regional and country levels. Efforts will be made to establish closer working relations with country directors (CDs) and country programme managers (CPMs) for systematic support on nutrition to the regional hubs and IFAD country offices (ICOs). Secondly, as part of IFAD's restructuring, nutrition has been placed in the same division together with the other mainstreaming themes. This will foster a multidisciplinary approach to the seeking of synergies and complementarities across other mainstreaming dimensions (environment and climate, gender and youth) in order to provide an integrated response to the nutrition challenges, ensuring consistency and increasing effectiveness. As IFAD functions are realigned and decentralized, it will be important to establish strong linkages between headquarters and hubs/ICOs.

## **IV. IFAD's Nutrition Action Plan 2019-2025**

### **A. Theory of change**

The theory of change framework (figure 1) illustrates the impact pathways (arrows from left to right) through which IFAD investment projects contribute to improved nutrition.

**Figure 1**  
**Theory of change for IFAD investment projects**



**Identified problems.** Countries throughout the world are affected by the triple burden of malnutrition (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight/obesity). Figure 1 lists some of the most common causes of malnutrition in rural areas – ranging from food insecurity and poverty, to: unsafe and unsustainable natural resource management; poor nutrition knowledge, attitudes and practices; and limited access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. Sociocultural and gender norms also play a key role. For example, women are often overburdened with multiple responsibilities and often discriminated against in intra-household food distribution.

**Project-level outcomes.** IFAD investment projects aim to address the nutrition problems identified in order to achieve project-level outcomes that are relevant for nutrition. Rather than investing in stand-alone nutrition actions, IFAD applies a nutrition lens to investments in agriculture, food systems and rural development so as to optimize their contribution to nutrition outcomes. Although project interventions and outcomes will be context-specific, figure 1 depicts some of the most relevant nutrition outcomes that projects aim to achieve. A detailed description of project-level nutrition outcomes is presented in box 1.

**Project-level results.** IFAD’s investments contribute to:

- (i) Diverse, nutritious and safe diets: IFAD projects play a central role in shaping food systems and food environments to be nutrition-sensitive, and in ensuring that diverse, nutritious and safe foods for a healthy diet are available and affordable at all times.
- (ii) Improved health: Although IFAD is primarily concerned with the food determinants of malnutrition, within its scope and mandate IFAD’s investments aim to contribute to improving the health of beneficiary populations, for example through providing safe drinking water.

**Global impact.** Ultimately, IFAD's impact on nutrition directly contributes to SDG 2: "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture". However, nutrition is recognized as central to achieving each and every SDG.

### **Box 1: Project-level nutrition outcomes**

**Growth and diversification of production.** To achieve improvements in diet quality, nutrition-sensitive projects should invest in a range of nutrient-rich foods that contribute to enhancing dietary quality for all, such as: fruits and vegetables; animal-sourced foods, including livestock and fish; neglected and underutilized species; bio-fortified crops; and staples such as grains, roots and tubers.

**Increased availability in markets.** Since food is not only produced – but also processed, distributed, marketed and consumed – projects should mainstream nutrition at all stages of agricultural value chains, leveraging the nutrition potential of markets and the private sector, with a special focus on ensuring food safety and reducing food loss and waste.

**Growth and diversification of income.** It is now widely accepted that raising incomes and production alone does not automatically lead to improvements in nutrition. However, when accompanied by additional investments, nutrition knowledge and awareness – along with the empowerment of women and youth – income can be an important pathway to the achievement of improved diets and health. Projects should therefore accompany efforts to increase and diversify income with essential complementary investments that ensure that the incomes are used in ways that improve nutrition.

**Nutrition knowledge and practices.** Projects should also aim to raise nutrition awareness as a key means for optimizing nutrition outcomes for rural people, by promoting behaviour change communication and related nutrition education activities to improve: food choices (in production, purchase and consumption); food preparation, processing and conservation; hygiene; and good nutritional practices.

**Empowerment of women and youth (especially adolescent girls).** Women's education, empowerment and control over resources are crucial factors for improving nutrition outcomes – not only for themselves, but for their entire families. Women's engagement in agriculture can also have potential negative effects on nutrition. Nutrition-sensitive projects should promote the equality and empowerment of women in ways that help improve nutrition – for example, through: investments in women's access to productive resources, time and labour-saving technologies; income-generating activities; and support to women's voice in decision-making. This also means that boys and men have to be involved, in order to create a conducive environment for change.

**Young people** are recognized as agents of change, with a critical role to play in transforming food systems and rural livelihoods and in changing behaviours that are harmful for nutrition. Adolescent girls are a nutritionally vulnerable group, especially given the large number of early pregnancies (which represent 11 per cent of births globally). Pregnant girls are more likely to die during childbirth, be left nutritionally depleted, and give birth to undernourished children who will grow up to be stunted adults, perpetuating the inter-generational cycle of malnutrition. Nutrition-sensitive projects should invest in adolescent girls' nutrition via a number of multisectoral interventions, such as education, behaviour change communication (for example on early pregnancies), water, sanitation and hygiene, and access to resources and jobs to help delay marriage and pregnancy.

**Environmental health.** Unsafe water, along with sanitation and health risks introduced by agricultural production (e.g. agrochemicals and zoonoses), are causes of malnutrition, since they affect the body's ability to absorb nutrients and weaken the immune system. To avoid these negative impacts, projects should ensure good management practices that protect natural resources and safeguard against health risks. Projects should also promote the incorporation of water, sanitation and hygiene investments – either directly funded by IFAD, or in partnership with other institutions.

**Climate resilience and environmental sustainability.** Projects should aim to strengthen the climate resilience of smallholder producers, and environmental sustainability, in order to improve the diets of the rural poor. Dietary patterns drive production systems, and their associated environmental impacts in terms for example of emissions and resource footprints.

Diets must therefore be assessed not only on their contribution to health and nutrition, but also on their potential to mitigate climate change and reduce the environmental impact of food production. Thus projects should adopt climate-smart and diversified food systems to ensure sustainable livelihoods and improved diets for rural families.

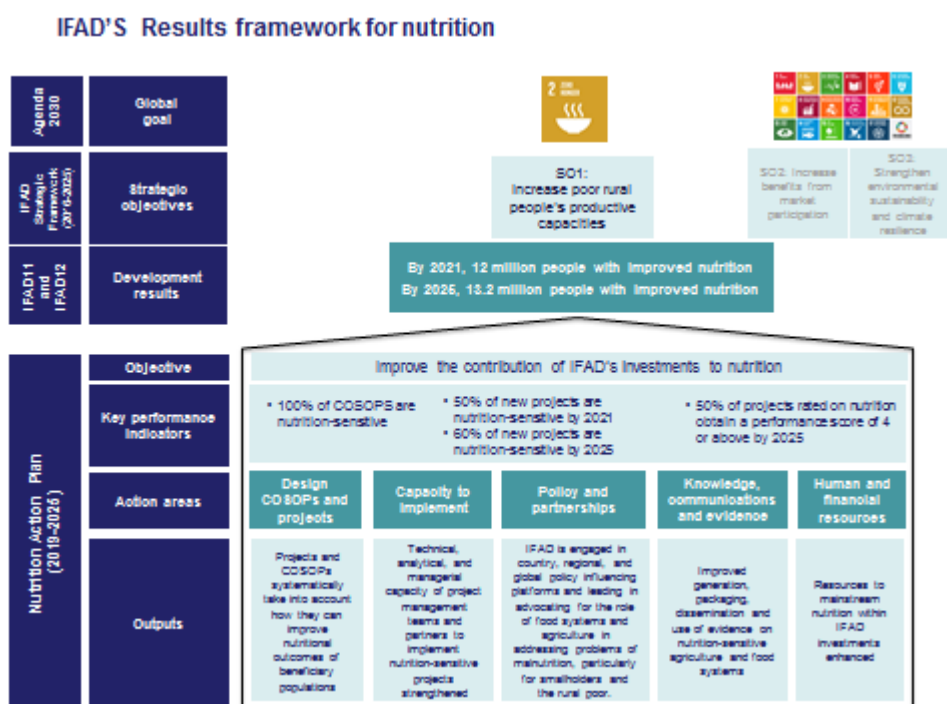
In **indigenous peoples'** communities, the nutrition transition characterized by a rapid modernization of diet and lifestyle is associated with a rising prevalence of chronic diseases. The effects of climate change are leading to rapid dietary changes, loss of traditional food systems, dependency on imported and industrial food, malnutrition and severe health problems. In spite of the high nutritional value of indigenous foods, and the undeniable contribution of indigenous livelihoods to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, their livelihoods are still not well understood and appreciated. Projects need to adopt a multifaceted, interdisciplinary and holistic approach. Key recommendations by indigenous peoples on how IFAD should support their food systems include the following: "(i) take a holistic approach to support and strengthen indigenous peoples' food systems, sustainable livelihood practices, governance systems, and cultural and spiritual values; (ii) raise awareness of the values of indigenous peoples' food systems, including through consumer awareness campaigns, food fairs and educational curricula; and (iii) facilitate dialogue with the private sector to respect indigenous peoples' food systems and sustainable livelihoods".\*

**Enabling environment.** Projects should seek to ensure appropriate nutrition governance, strengthened policy frameworks, and multisectoral action, commitments and partnerships, which are essential for creating an enabling environment for nutrition.

\* Second Global Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD, *Proceedings. Theme: Indigenous peoples' food systems and sustainable livelihoods, 12-13 February 2015* (Rome: IFAD).

## B. Results framework

Figure 2  
IFAD's results framework for nutrition



IFAD's results framework for nutrition is made up of four levels (see figure 2). At the global level, IFAD's investments in nutrition contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – directly to SDG 2 and indirectly to each and every SDG. IFAD's contribution to SDG 2 will be measured through one food security indicator – Prevalence of food insecurity (SDG 2.1.2) – and two nutrition indicators – Prevalence of stunting among children under five years of age (SDG 2.2.1) and Prevalence of wasting and overweight among children under five years of age (SDG 2.2.2).

Improving nutrition is embedded within IFAD's Strategic Framework. Good nutrition specifically contributes to Strategic Objective 1 ("Increase poor rural people's productive capacities"), given the crucial role of nutrition in building physical and intellectual capacities. Beyond that, adequate capacities are also essential for ensuring effective engagement with markets (Strategic Objective 2) and rural people's resilience (Strategic Objective 3). Thus, improving nutrition can be said to contribute to all three of IFAD's Strategic Objectives.

In terms of development results, IFAD has committed to improving the nutrition of 12 million people by 2021 (IFAD11 Results Management Framework). This target, established based on an analysis of past project performance, will be measured through impact assessments for selected projects. This development result will consist in a contribution by project-level nutrition outcomes (e.g. improvements in women's empowerment and increased production of nutritious foods; see figure 1) leading to diverse, nutritious and safe diets. By 2025 the target is expected to rise by at least 10 per cent, to 13.2 million people with improved nutrition.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The target for 2025 is tentative, to be revised and adjusted based on the results achieved by 2021 and discussions towards IFAD12.

Project results will be achieved based on three assumptions: (i) the adequacy of the (human and financial) resources to address key nutrition issues; (ii) sustained political commitment to nutrition; and (iii) no major crisis (natural or political) occurring during the project period.

The fourth level of the results framework corresponds to the overall objective of the Action Plan, and the specific outputs and indicators of each action area. The objective of the NAP is to improve the contribution to nutrition by IFAD's investments. This will be measured through the following three key performance indicators: (i) 100 per cent of COSOPs are nutrition-sensitive; (ii) 50 per cent of new projects are nutrition-sensitive by 2021, and 60 per cent by 2025;<sup>20</sup> and (iii) by 2025, at least 50 per cent of ongoing projects rated for nutrition at mid-term review obtain a performance score of 4 (moderately satisfactory) or above (see box 2 for key performance indicator definitions). These indicators are all directly related to operations and will be tracked on a regular basis through internal databases.

#### Box 2

##### **Key performance indicators**

- One hundred per cent of COSOPs are nutrition-sensitive. A nutrition-sensitive COSOP includes a nutrition situation assessment and sets out how the COSOP's strategic objectives relate to nutrition.
- Fifty per cent of new projects designed by 2021 are nutrition-sensitive. A nutrition-sensitive project has: a comprehensive situation analysis; explicit nutrition outcomes, indicators and activities; and a budget and clear implementation arrangements. It will have applied a nutrition lens to project design and will have a defined pathway through which it can maximize its contribution to improving nutrition. By 2025, the target will be raised to 60 per cent of new projects being nutrition-sensitive.
- By 2025, 50 per cent of ongoing nutrition-sensitive projects obtain a performance score of 4 (moderately satisfactory) or above on nutrition. Projects with a positive contribution to nutrition outcomes will have obtained a nutrition rating of 4 (moderately satisfactory) or above at project mid-term review.

IFAD will work through five mutually supportive action areas to achieve the NAP's objective: (i) design of nutrition-sensitive COSOPs and projects; (ii) capacity to implement; (iii) policy influence, engagement and partnerships; (iv) knowledge, communications and evidence; and (v) human and financial resources. Each of the action areas has an output, indicators and associated activities (see description of action areas below and the results framework in annex 1).

## **C. Principles of engagement**

To accelerate the mainstreaming of nutrition into operations and deliver on the commitments of this NAP 2019-2025, IFAD will adopt the following principles of engagement:

- **Ensure coherence and increase effectiveness through the integration of nutrition with other cross-cutting themes,** namely environment and climate, gender and youth. IFAD will systematically analyse and address the cross-cutting themes in an integrated manner, searching where possible for linkages, synergies and complementarities to improve nutrition, increase resilience and mitigate risks.

<sup>20</sup> The target for 2025 will be revised and adjusted based on the results achieved by 2021.

- **Apply a nutrition lens to investments.** Rather than investing in stand-alone nutrition actions, IFAD will apply a nutrition lens to the design and implementation of investments in agriculture, food systems and rural development, so as to optimize their contribution to improving nutrition. This will apply to geographical areas with high levels of malnutrition and will depend on the type of investments. For example, some rural finance projects have experienced challenges in mainstreaming nutrition. Applying a nutrition lens entails systematically identifying entry points and opportunities for nutrition in specific IFAD investment areas, as well as identifying potential risks for nutrition (vector-borne diseases due to unsafe water management, overburdening of women, etc.) and devising mitigation measures.
- **Adopt a multisectoral approach and engage with other actors.** Addressing the problem of malnutrition requires a multisectoral approach and the involvement of various stakeholders at all levels of government. IFAD will therefore optimize the complementary contributions that other sectors and actors make to nutrition, including policy engagement and coordination with partners working particularly in health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene. Supporting such an approach and the required partnerships should encourage programmatic convergence, sustainability, coherent messaging and scaling up.
- **Adopt a life cycle approach.** IFAD aims to improve the nutrition of all household members, primarily through improvements in dietary quality. However, to make sure that no one is left behind, attention will be given to the most nutritionally vulnerable groups in the household and their specific nutrient requirements (children, adolescent girls, women of reproductive age and in particular pregnant and lactating women), thus tailoring interventions to address their nutrition needs.

## D. Action areas

### Action area 1: Design nutrition-sensitive COSOPs and projects

**Output:** Projects and COSOPs systematically take into account how they can improve the nutritional outcomes of beneficiary populations.

#### Indicators:

- One hundred per cent of results-based COSOPs and CSNs are nutrition sensitive;
- Fifty per cent of new projects designed are nutrition sensitive by 2021, and 60 per cent by 2025.<sup>21</sup>

### Formulating nutrition-sensitive results-based COSOPs

COSOPs are strategic documents that define IFAD's rural development agenda in each country. Each COSOP is expected to carefully assess the rural development situation, including supporting national policies, and to identify strategies to address these problems. One of the development issues that requires thorough analysis in most of the countries where IFAD works is the nutrition situation. This is especially so in: countries with a high prevalence of malnutrition; the 60 countries that are currently part of the SUN global movement and have committed to ending

<sup>21</sup> The 2025 target is tentative, to be revised and adjusted based on the results achieved by 2021 and the resources mobilized in IFAD 12 replenishment consultations.

malnutrition in all its forms; those that endorsed the 2014 Rome Declaration on Nutrition; and those that will guide national priorities through reference to the SDGs – specifically SDG 2, which affirms the nexus between agriculture and nutrition.

While IFAD has achieved the target of making 100 per cent of COSOPs nutrition-sensitive (IFAD10 commitments), more needs to be done to ensure that nutrition integration is evidence-based and supported by a holistic multisectoral nutrition assessment. Drawing on a menu of integrated pathways for nutrition outcomes, and guidelines to assess and prioritize different pathways to nutrition, the nutrition specialists (either from IFAD or external consultants) will help ICOs to connect nutrition strategic actions with broader COSOP strategic objectives. The CSN will also benefit from this support.

### **Designing nutrition-sensitive projects**

The elements and activities of a nutrition-sensitive project are not standardized and will therefore depend on context. In developing nutrition-sensitive projects, IFAD integrates nutrition into projects, rather than designing stand-alone interventions, with a clear understanding that not every project – and not every component of every project – is amenable to such an approach. For projects to be effective, they must be clear on what nutrition problems they are aiming to improve and how they will do so.

While major milestones have been met in mainstreaming nutrition into projects at design, the perception still exists of nutrition mainstreaming as a complex issue – a deviation from the usual project goals, or an additional burden. There will be a need to address this perception and support the country teams in leveraging the opportunities to improve nutrition that are inherent in agriculture and food systems. The framework for implementing transformational approaches aiming at horizontal integration of mainstreaming themes (nutrition, gender, youth, and climate and environment) looks to ease the burden of focusing on each mainstreaming issue in isolation, by developing an integrated approach. Existing tools and guidelines – such as the Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) – will be revised to allow for a multisectoral and integrated assessment.

IFAD has set up a systematic process of technically supporting all investment projects so as to identify opportunities for nutrition mainstreaming right from the concept note stage. For each project with potential to address the nutrition problem, and under the leadership of the CDs/CPMs and project technical leads (PTLs), the IFAD technical specialists in nutrition will ensure that a nutrition lens is applied to: assessing and prioritizing different pathways to nutrition outcomes; evaluating entry points for nutrition-sensitive actions within the investment; and selecting appropriate nutrition indicators. Projects will need to articulate the pathways through which they achieve nutrition impact. IFAD will provide appropriate guidance (How to Do Notes, templates and tools) and technical assistance to ensure adequate capacities to conduct a holistic situation analysis and optimization of entry points for integrating nutrition into a variety of investments. The tools and resources of partners (e.g. FAO and WFP) will be leveraged and adapted so as to avoid duplication of efforts (see action area 4).

### **Key actions**

- Ensure that nutrition is systematically integrated into all steps of the project and COSOP design processes;
- Undertake a comprehensive nutrition situation analysis for COSOPs and projects, with integration of nutrition (map out an impact pathway and evaluate entry points for nutrition-sensitive actions; identify activities and indicators and ensure that they are costed);



- Ensure that COSOP and project design teams receive technical assistance and that they include nutrition experts;
- Regularly review COSOPs and projects to categorize them as nutrition-sensitive or not, and use learnings to inform future designs.

## **Action area 2: Capacity to implement**

**Output:** Strengthening of the technical, analytical and managerial capacity of project management teams and partners (government institutions, private sector, NGOs and rural institutions) to implement nutrition-sensitive projects.

### **Indicators:**

- Number of persons provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition<sup>22</sup> (at least 30% of nutrition-sensitive projects at MTR);
- By 2025, 50 per cent of ongoing nutrition-sensitive projects obtain a performance score of 4 (moderately satisfactory) or above on nutrition in project mid-term reviews.<sup>23</sup>
- By 2025, 50 per cent of ongoing projects that are rated on nutrition obtain a performance score of 4 (moderately satisfactory) or above during project supervision.<sup>24</sup>
- At least one training event is carried out each year for implementing partners on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems.

The experience to date suggests that despite their interest, most of IFAD's implementing partners have limited knowledge of: the justification for and specifics of nutrition-sensitive agriculture; what that entails in terms of project activities, monitoring and evaluation; and the need for a multisectoral approach. In response, and to ensure the success of its operations, IFAD will incorporate actions to strengthen country-level capacities in the design of nutrition-sensitive projects, just as it does normally for overall project management. The range of implementing partners for IFAD projects is wide, including project management units in government agencies, civil society organizations, and private sector and producer organizations. Projects should pursue the strengthening of the capacities of key organizations and individuals at various levels (national, regional, district and local), as well as those of the overall systems (e.g. through cross-agency planning forums). Capacity development is needed to address weaknesses in various areas – strategic, technical, analytical, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The capacity of implementing partners will be developed through a variety of platforms, such as regional implementation workshops, start-up workshops and specific capacity-building workshops.

Consideration of capacity to implement will start at design, when multisectoral and multistakeholder partners will be identified to be responsible for implementing components of the nutrition-sensitive project, and their capacity will be assessed based on their expected role and outputs. Capacity-development activities will be defined and costed within the project's total budget, as well as in the annual workplan and budget. Where needed, IFAD will facilitate partnerships that support implementation of nutrition-sensitive projects, for example to link projects with public sector, private sector and rural producer organizations so as to better integrate nutrition-sensitive considerations into value chains.

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<sup>22</sup> RIMS output indicator.

<sup>23</sup> At MTR the performance ratings will be applied to all projects.

<sup>24</sup> At supervision the performance ratings will be applied to all nutrition-sensitive projects, and projects that – despite not meeting the criteria to be classified as nutrition-sensitive – request support on nutrition or refer to nutrition in at least one of the following elements: (i) objectives; (ii) indicators; or (iii) activities. A performance rating on nutrition is compulsory for all projects at mid-term review.

- Technical expertise will be deployed to support preparation of the project implementation manual to clearly define nutrition-sensitive activities, input requirements, the methodology for their implementation, M&E process and nutrition-related indicators. It will also support development of terms of reference for nutrition experts and technical services, such as baseline surveys or other specific support needed by the projects. Nutrition-sensitive projects will be encouraged to identify a nutrition focal point to oversee implementation of nutrition-sensitive investments. Support to implementation will be provided on an ongoing basis (especially to nutrition-sensitive projects). IFAD will develop detailed guidelines on how to accurately rate nutrition-sensitive projects, for use by consultants and other staff during supervision and mid-term review missions.

There is an increasing demand to retrofit nutrition into projects that were not considered nutrition-sensitive at design. Support in order to identify opportunities (and risks) for nutrition and retrofitting into projects will be provided to CPMs with an interest in mainstreaming nutrition during implementation. This will be accomplished for selected projects during regular mid-term review, supervision and implementation support. IFAD will provide guidance to country teams on when and how to consider retrofitting nutrition into ongoing investments.

### **Key actions**

- Provide brokering services with other specialized organizations in reference to capacity needs;
- Develop detailed guidance in the project implementation manual on implementation of nutrition-sensitive actions (all nutrition-sensitive projects), including terms of reference for staff/focal points, surveys and other technical support at start-up;
- Assess and develop the capacity of implementing partners;
- Identify project focal points for nutrition – particularly for nutrition-sensitive projects – and train them on their role;
- Provide technical assistance during project implementation and supervision missions;
- Promote the development of partnerships as needed to facilitate technical support and implementation of nutrition-sensitive projects; and
- Promote platforms for learning between projects, countries and regions (events, information-sharing platform), including South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

### **Action area 3: Policy influence, engagement and partnerships**

**Output:** IFAD is engaged in country, regional and global policy-influencing platforms and is leading in advocating for the role of food systems and agriculture in addressing problems of malnutrition, as well as on the role of smallholders in the world's food and nutrition security.

#### **Indicators:**

- By 2025, at least five concrete nutrition-related policy deliverables that enhance an enabling environment for nutrition are produced through national, regional and global bodies (policy papers, joint advocacy, events, media briefings);
- At least five national, regional and global nutrition-related policy-influencing events that enhance IFAD's visibility are held each year (presenting, facilitating, chairing, hosting);
- At least five strategic partnerships are developed and/or maintained by 2025.

## **Governance, policy influence and engagement**

IFAD is already actively engaging in various inter-agency and multisectoral platforms at the global level. These are: the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition; the UN Network for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)/Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and undernutrition (REACH); the Rome-based agencies (RBAs); and the Committee on World Food Security. IFAD also continues to advocate for nutrition among opinion leaders and high-level political champions (e.g. through the World Economic Forum and the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development).

Although at the global level IFAD has taken an active role in policy dialogue, there is scope for increasing engagement at the regional and country levels. At the regional level, IFAD is engaging with various intergovernmental bodies, such as the African Union, NEPAD and the Japan-led Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa. However, country-level policy influencing on nutrition has been a major challenge, due to IFAD's limited capacity and competing priorities.

IFAD decentralization within a regional hub and country focus model is an opportunity to strengthen country directors' engagement in policy processes such as development partner working groups, United Nations country teams or relevant ministerial-level coordination platforms. Considering the multiple issues and platforms that the CDs and CPMs will be expected to engage in, it will be important to leverage other United Nations agencies and prioritize participation in key policy platforms only. Policy dialogue and coordination are essential in order to ensure a multisectoral response to nutrition challenges and awareness of the role of agriculture in improving nutrition. (Many governments still consider nutrition to be a health sector responsibility.) The IFAD nutrition team will support regional and ICO staff to engage in regional and country-level policy dialogue, and institutional coordination platforms to bring about more effective and efficient nutrition governance. This will: result in more coherent policies and programmes; highlight the role of agriculture and food-based approaches to reducing malnutrition and creating more nutritious food systems; promote collaboration and convergence; and ensure adequate levels of funding for nutrition.

To further strengthen IFAD's global, regional and country-level policy influencing and engagement, evidence-based common messages and talking points will be developed for use in advocating for nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems at all levels.

### **Partnerships**

IFAD makes strategic partnerships the cornerstone of its operations, leveraging these for financing, knowledge, advocacy and influence at the national, regional and global levels. Partnerships are also an essential part of IFAD's scaling-up strategy. By working with partners, IFAD leverages the impact of its investments and enhances their sustainability. With its enhancement of country presence, IFAD's decentralization will provide opportunities for strengthening partnership-building on nutrition at the regional and country levels.

Partnerships at the country level are particularly relevant for nutrition, given that the causes of malnutrition are multidimensional and require interventions across sectors. IFAD will need to facilitate partnerships between agriculture and other sectors – particularly health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene. The project delivery teams will ensure that, to the extent possible, country-level collaboration is integrated into the implementation arrangements and budgeted for at project design.

IFAD places special emphasis on engagement and partnership with the private sector – especially rural small and medium-sized enterprises, a key player in creating efficient food systems. One important aspect of investing in rural people

means promoting activities that link producers to efficient and enabling input markets and to fair and well-functioning output markets. To improve nutrition, it will be prudent for IFAD to work with producers and private-sector firms to integrate nutrition into agriculture, value chains and the food system more broadly. IFAD will also work with civil society to mobilize better governance and contribute to awareness-raising and communication on nutrition issues, benefiting in particular from its role in representing the voices of the most vulnerable and mobilizing nutrition champions.

IFAD will also explore partnerships with other development partners, including other international financial institutions, United Nations agencies and CGIAR centres, leveraging the comparative advantage of each agency. IFAD has already collaborated with the RBAs in a number of areas, including: technical assistance in the design of projects; capacity development for programme management units on the design and implementation of nutrition-sensitive projects; joint events; and development of knowledge products. IFAD and the CGIAR's Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) currently have a partnership to support mainstreaming of nutrition through research, support for operations and capacity development. IFAD will continue to pursue other partnerships, especially with academic institutions and other international financial institutions (the African Development Bank, World Bank and Asian Development Bank) to bring in expertise in particular areas of interest or action.

### **Key actions**

- Participate in nutrition-related policy, advocacy and knowledge-sharing platforms (RBAs, UNSCN, UN Network for SUN/REACH, CFS, African Union, NEPAD, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, IFNA and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development);
- Contribute to global food security and nutrition reports and share country experiences in mainstreaming nutrition (e.g. the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World/SOFI, the Global Nutrition Report/GNR, the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition, Nutrition for Growth and the Rural Development Report);
- Engage in country-level policy dialogue to create an enabling environment for nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems based on country needs;
- Engage with the United Nations global nutrition agenda on nutrition at the country level (United Nations country team, United Nations Development Assistance Framework, joint programming and reporting and UN Network for SUN/REACH);
- Draw up a communication and advocacy plan, including communication messages (talking points and key messages) for use in policy dialogue at national, regional and global levels;
- Leverage the comparative advantages of other partners (United Nations, NGOs, CGIAR and the private sector) to benefit IFAD's operations (in financing, technical assistance, scaling up, advocacy and joint programming).

### **Action area 4: Knowledge, communications and evidence**

**Output:** Improved generation, packaging, dissemination and use of evidence on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems.

#### **Indicators:**

- By 2025, 75 per cent of nutrition-sensitive projects reporting on at least one core nutrition indicator;
- Each year, at least one strategic knowledge product is developed and being used to guide nutrition-sensitive project design, implementation and M&E policy engagement (toolkits, How to Do Notes, videos);

- A dissemination strategy promoting the uptake of research and other knowledge products is developed and implemented by 2025.

### **Generate evidence (research, M&E)**

IFAD will improve the way it assesses its own project experiences, synthesizing lessons learned and developing good practices to share across projects and incorporate into design and implementation. Projects will be supported to put in place strong monitoring for management systems, based on impact pathways, reflected in the project logical framework. To generate reliable knowledge, however, IFAD will need to ensure that RIMS and complementary baselines (or other surveys) are designed to produce the information that is needed, with rigorous valid design and implementation, more systematic analysis of data, and its reporting and use for decision-making. Capacity development on M&E for project teams will be a requirement, especially for projects that are nutrition-sensitive. This includes: the capacity of project teams in survey design and sampling; training of fieldworkers; and data collection, management and analysis. Guidance on M&E – including for the IFAD core indicators – will be developed to support project teams.

To ensure that operations take full advantage of the experiences and knowledge being generated, IFAD will develop a clear and operationally relevant research and knowledge agenda that will support the effectiveness of nutrition mainstreaming, including monitoring and impact evaluations. Through impact assessments, IFAD will also generate the evidence that its nutrition-relevant investments actually work. IFAD has identified two project-level core nutrition indicators in the RIMS: percentage of women reporting improved quality of their diets (outcome indicator); and number of persons provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition (output indicator). IFAD will ensure that projects have the capacity to collect quality data, and interpret and use the indicators to inform decision-making.

IFAD will continuously strengthen its engagement with research and knowledge communities, such as CGIAR's A4NH, academic institutions, other international financial institutions and United Nations agencies. IFAD will function as a primary user of research and evidence around agriculture, food systems and nutrition, and also as an active research partner. This will ensure that IFAD remains close and up-to-date on nutrition-related research, guiding it so that it is useful for its operations while also ensuring understanding of leading-edge methods and issues. Areas that could benefit from research include: how neglected and underutilized species can help in the reaping of the agronomic, dietary and cultural benefits of biodiversity, including the preservation of traditional crops, animals, fisheries, agricultural practices and gastronomy; nutrition-friendly metrics and technologies; how to incorporate nutrition into project economic and financial analyses; innovative approaches for engaging women and youth effectively and sustainably in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and nutrition-sensitive value chains; and a structured approach to addressing overweight and obesity through agricultural investments.

## **Knowledge management and communications**

Knowledge generated through research will be a key input for project guidance, technical assistance and capacity development during all phases of the project cycle – design, implementation, supervision and M&E (see action areas 1 and 2). The knowledge products produced will respond to IFAD’s specific needs (for example, building capacity in areas where capacity gaps have been identified, such as M&E) and will be aligned with IFAD’s Strategic Framework, as well as with the framework for implementing transformational approaches and integrating nutrition with the other mainstreaming areas (gender, youth, climate and environment).

IFAD will develop a dissemination strategy that will translate research findings and knowledge into easily available, understandable, useful, and usable products. This strategy should pay careful attention to the key messages to be disseminated and the needs of its various audiences, internal and external, including implementing partners at country level, through the use of innovative delivery channels. This will also enhance the link with IFAD’s global engagement efforts and build bridges between operations and international policy dialogue. IFAD likewise recognizes that partners are also commissioning relevant research, producing publications and hosting platforms for knowledge-sharing, as in the case of the UN Network for SUN/REACH. To the extent possible, IFAD will leverage partner resources.

### **Key actions**

- Institutionalize a systematic approach to the consistent capture of the best practices and lessons learned from projects, and develop a compendium of good practices in mainstreaming nutrition at design and implementation;
- Conduct research on nutrition-friendly metrics and technologies for better results in nutrition-sensitive projects;
- Develop a dissemination strategy to promote effective uptake of nutrition-related research and knowledge products within IFAD;
- Develop guidance and toolkits for the project cycle phases:
  - (i) Design: support nutrition-sensitive design (e.g. situation analysis, theory of change, costing templates and assessment of implementation capacity);
  - (ii) Implementation: detailed guidance on supervision ratings and guidance to integrate nutrition into household methodologies such as the Gender Action Learning System (GALS);
  - (iii) M&E: use of core IFAD project-level outcome and output indicators, baselines and other nutrition surveys during the project cycle;
- Develop knowledge products on issues of specific relevance (e.g. toolkit to mainstream nutrition into operations, operational toolkit to analyse indigenous peoples’ food systems and an approach to address overweight and obesity).

### **Action area 5: Human and financial resources**

**Output:** Resources secured to mainstream nutrition within IFAD investments.

#### **Indicators:**

- Additional resources are mobilized in support of IFAD’s nutrition mainstreaming agenda;
- Roster of nutrition consultants in place by 2021 and regularly updated;
- Each year at least one nutrition awareness session organized for IFAD staff at headquarters, and at least one per hub.

#### **Resource mobilization**

The capacity to deliver on IFAD's nutrition commitments will require stepping up efforts in resource mobilization so as to be commensurate with the commitments adopted.

Supplementary funding from the Governments of Canada and Germany has played a fundamental role in catalysing IFAD's corporate capacity in nutrition. Additional funds will be sought to fully implement this Action Plan between 2019 and 2025 (with the benchmark of US\$5 million for nutrition in IFAD9 and IFAD10). The amounts will be defined as specific activities are developed, including for specialized technical assistance, capacity-building efforts, development of specific knowledge products, innovative research and support of further innovations.

In order to ensure a strategic use of IFAD's grant financing, the potential will also be explored of grants to complement nutrition-sensitive investments (through research on key knowledge gaps, piloting of innovative approaches to be scaled up by investment projects, capacity-building, etc.).

An informal group could be set up of Member States on the Executive Board that are particularly interested in nutrition, providing an opportunity to share continuous updates on the achievements and progress of the NAP and facilitating resource mobilization.

### **Human resource capacity**

Although the first NAP assumed mainstreaming nutrition as a corporate-wide responsibility, there has been limited awareness of nutrition as a shared institutional responsibility and a lack of clear definition of roles and accountability beyond the nutrition team. The creation of awareness and its capacity to deliver on these responsibilities will be key in supporting implementation. IFAD will update the existing capacity development plan for nutrition mainstreaming so as to align it with the new decentralized structure, new business processes and horizontal integration of mainstreaming issues. The ECG division will use multiple platforms to create awareness and build staff capacity. To the extent possible, sessions will be integrated with other mainstreaming themes so as to ensure a clear understanding of the linkages.

Training and awareness-raising on nutrition for headquarters and decentralized staff at the hub level constitute a key strategy. This includes awareness in relation to IFAD's commitments on nutrition, IFAD's approach to mainstreaming nutrition, and the applicable roles and responsibilities. The key message to the CDs, CPMs and ICOs is that embedding nutrition should not necessarily add another layer of requirements to their tasks, but rather that its inclusion should be seen to facilitate achievement of IFAD's current existing goals. One of the biggest opportunities that IFAD will leverage is in integrating nutrition lessons into the envisaged regional operational academy trainings that are to target staff in the hubs and ICOs. Other platforms include seminars (e.g. breakfast or lunch seminars, webinars, staff meetings and retreats), and other communication materials (e.g. videos).

Increased commitments and awareness on nutrition have led to a substantial increase in demand for technical assistance, going beyond the limited capacity of the nutrition team. Learning from gender, IFAD will undertake an initiative to develop a roster of consultants – nutrition-agriculture/food system specialists at regional and national levels – that it can draw on for support in design and implementation of IFAD-funded projects. The IFAD nutrition team will coach these consultants on IFAD's approach to mainstreaming nutrition, as well as on the use of the IFAD toolkits.

Training of staff and consultants will be done in collaboration with partners (RBAs and the CGIAR's A4NH), and will take advantage of online training courses hosted by partners.

### **Key actions**

- Mobilize resources to implement the action plan;
- Develop a resource mobilization strategy;
- Develop a consultants' roster, in close collaboration with other mainstreaming areas;
- Develop through various means and platforms the capacity of IFAD staff on nutrition mainstreaming, based on their roles and responsibilities, including the Operations Academy;
- Develop an eLearning course on nutrition (integrated with other mainstreaming themes).

## **V. Management and implementation modalities**

IFAD's Management and Member States on the Executive Board have committed to supporting the mainstreaming of nutrition. One of the key pillars of IFAD's strategic vision of inclusive and sustainable rural transformation is for rural families to achieve food and nutrition security. IFAD has committed to ensuring the improved nutrition of 12 million people by 2021 and 13.2 million people by 2025.<sup>25</sup> Achieving the targets set out in this Action Plan will require the commitment of all responsible departments and divisions, both at headquarters and in the field.

To ensure accountability, progress on implementation will be tracked at mid-term and on an ongoing basis, through an internal database established to categorize all new COSOPs and projects that have mainstreamed nutrition, and a review of all MTRs and supervision reports of nutrition-sensitive projects. Progress will be reported through RIDE and the IFAD dashboard.

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<sup>25</sup> The target for 2025 is to be revised and adjusted based on results achieved by 2021.



## Annex 1: Results framework

| IFAD NUTRITION ACTION PLAN (2019-2025)  |   |                       |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Global goal</b><br>(2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)   | SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture   |                       |
| <b>Strategic Objective</b><br>(IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025)  | SO1: Increase poor rural people's productive capacities   |                       |
| <b>Development results/outcomes</b><br>(IFAD 11 and IFAD 12)  | By 2021, 12 million people with improved nutrition<br>By 2025, 13.2 million people with improved nutrition <sup>26</sup>                                      |                       |
| <b>Objective of NAP</b>   | Improve the contribution of IFAD's investments to nutrition   |                       |
| Action area 1: Design nutrition-sensitive COSOPs and projects   |   |                       |
| Output  | Indicator   | Means of verification |
| COSOPs and projects systematically take into account how they can improve the nutritional outcomes of beneficiary populations.  | On hundred per cent of COSOPs are nutrition-sensitive.<br>Fifty per cent of new projects designed are nutrition-sensitive by 2021, 60% by 2025. <sup>26</sup> | COSOPs<br>ORMS        |
| Activity  |   |                       |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that nutrition is systematically integrated into all steps of the project and COSOP design processes.</li> <li>2. Undertake a comprehensive nutrition situation analysis for COSOPs and projects, with integration of nutrition (map out an impact pathway and evaluate entry points for nutrition-sensitive actions; identify activities and indicators and ensure they are costed).</li> <li>3. Ensure that COSOP and project design teams receive technical assistance and include nutrition experts.</li> <li>4. Regularly review COSOPs and projects to categorize them as nutrition-sensitive or not, and use learnings to inform future designs.</li> </ol> |   |                       |
| Action area 2: Capacity to implement  |   |                       |
| Output  | Indicator   | Means of verification |

<sup>26</sup> The 2025 target is tentative. It will be revised and adjusted based on the results achieved by 2021 and the resources mobilized in the IFAD12 replenishment consultations.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Strengthening of the technical, analytical, and managerial capacity of project management teams and partners (government institutions, private sector, NGOs and rural institutions) to implement nutrition-sensitive projects.  | Number of persons provided with targeted support to improve their nutrition.  | ORMS  |
|   | At least 50 per cent of ongoing projects that are rated on nutrition obtain a performance score of 4 (moderately satisfactory) or above at project mid-term review.   | ORMS  |
|   | At least 50 per cent of ongoing projects that are rated on nutrition obtain a performance score of 4 (moderately satisfactory) or above at project supervision.   | ORMS  |
|   | At least one training event for implementing partners on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems.  | Reports   |
| <b>Activity</b>   |   |   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide brokering services on capacity needs with other specialized organizations.</li> <li>2. At start-up, provide detailed guidance in the project implementation manual on implementation of nutrition-sensitive actions (for all nutrition-sensitive projects), including terms of reference for staff/focal points, surveys and other technical support.</li> <li>3. Assess and develop the capacity of implementing partners.</li> <li>4. Identify project focal points for nutrition, particularly for nutrition-sensitive projects, and train them on their role.</li> <li>5. Provide technical assistance during project implementation and supervision missions.</li> <li>6. Promote the development of partnerships as needed to facilitate implementation of nutrition-sensitive projects.</li> <li>7. Promote learning platforms between projects, countries and regions (events, information sharing platform) including South-South and Triangular Cooperation.</li> </ol> |   |   |
| <b>Action area 3: Policy influence, engagement and partnerships</b>   |   |   |
| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>  | <b>Means of verification</b>                            |
| IFAD is engaged in country, regional and global policy-influencing platforms and is leading in advocating for the role of food systems and agriculture in addressing problems of malnutrition, as well as the role of smallholders in the world's food and nutrition security.  | <p>By 2025, at least five concrete nutrition-related policy deliverables that enhance an enabling environment for nutrition are produced through national, regional and global bodies (policy papers, joint advocacy, events and media briefings).</p> <p>At least five national, regional and global nutrition-related policy-influencing events that enhance IFAD's visibility are held each year (presenting, facilitating, chairing and hosting).</p> | <p>Reports</p> <p>Mission reports, progress reports</p> |

|  |  |                              |
|--|--|------------------------------|
|  | At least five strategic partnerships are developed and/or maintained.  | Agreements, joint products   |
| <b>Activity</b>  |  |                              |
| <p>1. Participate in nutrition-related policy, advocacy and knowledge-sharing platforms (RBAs, UNSCN, UN Network, CFS, African Union, NEPAD, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, IFNA, High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development).</p> <p>2. Contribute to global food security and nutrition reports and share country experiences in mainstreaming nutrition (e.g. State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, Global Nutrition Report, Nutrition for Growth, United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition and Rural Development Report).</p> <p>3. Engage in country-level policy dialogue to create an enabling environment for nutrition-sensitive agriculture based on country needs.</p> <p>4. Engage with the United Nations global nutrition agenda at the country level (United Nations Country Team, United Nations Development Assistance Framework, joint programming, reporting, UN Network for SUN/REACH).</p> <p>5. Leverage the comparative advantages of other partners (United Nations, private sector, NGOs, CGIAR) to benefit IFAD's operations (through financing, technical assistance, scaling up and joint programming).</p> <p>6. Draw up a nutrition communication and advocacy plan, including communication messages (talking points and key messages) for use in policy dialogue at national, regional and global levels.</p> |  |                              |
| <b>Action area 4: Knowledge, communications and evidence</b>   |  |                              |
| <b>Output</b>  | <b>Indicator</b>   | <b>Means of verification</b> |
| Improved generation, packaging, dissemination and use of evidence on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems.   | Seventy-five per cent of projects reporting on at least one IFAD core nutrition indicator.   | ORMS                         |
|  | Each year, at least one strategic knowledge product developed and being used to guide nutrition-sensitive project design, implementation, M&E and policy engagement (toolkits, How to Do Notes, videos). | Knowledge product            |
|  | A dissemination strategy promoting the uptake of research and other knowledge products is developed and implemented.   | Dissemination strategy       |
| <b>Activity</b>  |  | <b>Responsibility</b>        |
| <p>1. Institutionalize a systematic approach to the consistent capture of best practices and lessons learned from projects, and develop a compendium of good practices for mainstreaming nutrition at design and implementation.</p> <p>2. Conduct research on nutrition-friendly metrics and technologies for better results in nutrition-sensitive projects.</p> <p>3. Develop a dissemination strategy to promote effective uptake of research and knowledge products within IFAD.</p>  |  |                              |

4. Develop guidance and toolkits:

- Design: support nutrition-sensitive design (e.g. situation analysis, theory of change, costing templates and assessment of implementation capacity);
- Implementation: detailed guidance on supervision ratings and on integrating nutrition into GALS and household methodologies;
- M&E: use of core IFAD project-level outcome and output indicators, baselines and other nutrition surveys during the project cycle.

5. Develop knowledge products on issues of specific relevance (e.g. the operational toolkit to analyse indigenous peoples' food systems, and approach to addressing overweight and obesity).

**Action area 5: Human and financial resources**

| <b>Output</b>  | <b>Indicator</b>   | <b>Means of verification</b> |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| Resources secured to mainstream nutrition within IFAD investments. | Adequate resources are mobilized in support of IFAD's nutrition mainstreaming agenda.                        | Contracts                    |
|  | A roster of nutrition consultants is in place by 2021 and regularly updated.                                 | Roster                       |
|  | Each year at least one awareness session organized for IFAD staff at headquarters, and at least one per hub. | Reports, videos              |

**Activity**

1. Mobilize resources to implement the action plan.
2. Develop a resource mobilization strategy.
3. Develop a consultants' roster, in close collaboration with other mainstreaming areas.
4. Develop through various means and platforms the capacity of IFAD staff on nutrition mainstreaming, based on their roles and responsibilities, including through the Operations Academy.
5. Develop an eLearning course on nutrition (integrated with other mainstreaming themes).

## Annex 2: Glossary of terms

**Acute malnutrition** or **wasting** is characterized by a rapid loss of fat and muscle weight. Wasting is classified as either moderate or severe, based on body measurements.<sup>1</sup> It is defined by a weight-for-height z-score < -2 standard deviations from the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards.

**Chronic malnutrition** or **stunting** is a form of child growth failure. Unlike acute malnutrition, chronic malnutrition occurs over time. A child who is stunted or chronically malnourished often appears to be normally proportioned but is actually shorter than normal for his or her age. Stunting can start before birth, and is caused by poor maternal nutrition, poor feeding practices, poor food quality or frequent infections, which can slow down growth (United Nations Children's Fund). It is defined by a height-for-age z-score of less than -2 standard deviations from the WHO Child Growth Standards. Although stunting is irreversible, it is preventable. This is why the first 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday, also called the window of opportunity, constitute the most critical time for positive impact on a child's development, by providing the right nutrition and care to the mother and child.

**Dietary diversity** contributes to a healthy or balanced diet. A **balanced diet** is a diet that provides energy and all essential nutrients for growth and a healthy and active life. Since few foods contain all the nutrients required to permit normal growth, maintenance and functioning of the human body, a variety of food is needed to cover a person's macronutrient and micronutrient needs. Any combination of foods that provides the correct amount of dietary energy and all essential nutrients, in optimal amounts and proportions, is a balanced diet.

A **food-based approach** is an approach focusing on food as the primary tool for improving the quality of the diet and for overcoming and preventing malnutrition and nutritional deficiencies.

A **food system** comprises all the activities and elements – including environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructure and institutions – that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, along with the outputs of those activities – including any socio-economic and environmental aspects.

**Malnutrition** is caused by inadequate, excessive or imbalanced intakes of carbohydrates, protein or fats (macronutrients) and vitamins and minerals (micronutrients). Malnutrition is currently characterized as a triple burden, with three forms that often coexist within the same country, household or individual. These three forms of malnutrition are: (i) undernutrition, inadequate levels of food intake and repeated infectious diseases; (ii) micronutrient deficiencies, especially those of public health importance such as iron, iodine, zinc and vitamin A; and (iii) overweight and obesity, resulting from an excess of certain food components such as fats and sugars relative to levels of activity.

**Nutrition lens:** Programming using a nutrition lens means developing programmes that take nutrition considerations into account – be it increasing the nutritional impact or avoiding a negative nutritional impact.

**Nutrition mainstreaming** means incorporating explicit nutrition objectives and indicators into the design of programmes and investments, plus: nutrition-sensitive

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/training/2.3/20.html>.

activities like the empowerment of women; production diversification; production of nutrient-dense crops; improvements in processing, storage and preservation; and nutrition education. Special attention should be paid to the targeting of vulnerable groups and trying to track and mitigate potential harm.

**Nutrition security** is a fundamental conceptual component of **food and nutrition security**. The term "nutrition security" emerged in the mid-1990s. In contrast to the "food" focus of the term "food security" (which often leads to a focus on energy intake), nutrition security focuses on the "nutrition" aspects. It combines ensuring that food is adequate in both quantity and quality and that the non-food factors essential for good nutrition are also accounted for. FAO has suggested a definition of nutrition security as being "when all people at all times consume food of sufficient quantity in calories and quality in terms of variety, diversity, nutrient content and safety to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health, education and care".

**Nutrition-sensitive agriculture** is an approach that seeks to maximize agriculture's contribution to nutrition. This includes the multiple benefits derived from: enjoying a variety of foods; recognizing the nutritional value of food for good nutrition, health and productivity; and the social significance of the food and agricultural sector for supporting rural livelihoods. Nutrition-sensitive agriculture also entails targeting poor households, promoting gender equity and providing nutrition education, so that household resources are used to improve household members' nutrition, especially that of women and young children. Finally, it involves linking agriculture to sectors that address other causes of malnutrition – namely education, health and social protection.

A **nutrition-sensitive country strategic opportunities programme** includes a nutrition situation assessment (including a review of strategies, policies and programmes, as well as coordination mechanisms related to nutrition) and identifies how the COSOP's strategic objectives relate and contribute to nutrition.

A **nutrition-sensitive project** has explicit nutrition objectives, activities and indicators. It will have applied a nutrition lens to project design and will have a defined pathway through which it can maximize its contribution to improving nutrition.

The **nutrition transition** tends to accompany economic development, with higher incomes and changes in dietary patterns and lifestyles. Complex carbohydrates, fibre and coarse grains are replaced by higher amounts of saturated fats, salt, simple sugars and ultra-processed foods. The diet also tends to have more animal-source food (meat, dairy and fish). However, in the initial stages of the transition, physical activity levels go down, as economic development leads to more sedentary lifestyles, particularly in terms of labour. As a consequence, even as undernutrition declines, overweight and obesity rise, as do non-transmissible chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

## **Annex 3: List of people consulted in the preparation of the Nutrition Action Plan**

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| SKD                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amath Pathe Sene, Regional Climate and Environmental Specialist, WCA</li> </ul>   |
| ECG                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antonella Cordone, Senior Technical Specialist, Indigenous Peoples</li> <li>• Helen Gillman, Senior Knowledge Management Specialist</li> <li>• Liza Leclerc, Lead Technical Specialist, Climate Change</li> <li>• Mattia Prayer Galletti, Lead Technical Specialist, Youth</li> <li>• Ndaya Beltchika, Lead Technical Specialist, Gender and Social Inclusion</li> <li>• Nicolas Tremblay, Regional Climate and Environment Specialist, NEN</li> </ul>  |
| PMI                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antonio Rota, Lead Technical Specialist, Livestock Development</li> <li>• Maria Elena Mangiafico, Knowledge Management and Grants Officer</li> <li>• Richard Abila, Senior Technical Specialist, Fisheries and Aquaculture</li> <li>• Robert Delve, Senior Technical Specialist, Agronomy (on behalf of PMI)</li> <li>• Tom Anyonge, Lead Technical Specialist, Institutions and Organizations</li> <li>• Wafaa El Khoury, Lead Technical Specialist, Agronomy</li> <li>• Zainab Zitta Semgalawe, Senior Technical Specialist, Institutions and Programme Implementation</li> </ul> |
| PRM                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courtney Hood, Partnership and Resource Mobilization Officer</li> </ul>   |
| PMD                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edward Heinemann, Lead Technical and Policy Advisor to the Associate Vice-President</li> <li>• Shantanu Mathur, Lead Adviser to the Associate Vice-President</li> </ul>   |
| Regional divisions            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fabrizio Bresciani, Regional Economist, APR</li> <li>• Ladislao Rubio, Country Programme Manager, LAC</li> <li>• Nigel Brett, Lead Portfolio Adviser, APR</li> <li>• Rasha Omar, Country Programme Manager, APR</li> </ul>  |
| IFAD country offices          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aimable Ntukanyagwe, Country Programme Officer, Rwanda, ESA</li> <li>• Kadei Kadre, Country Programme Officer, Niger, WCA</li> <li>• Meera Misha, Country Coordinator, India, APR</li> <li>• Moses Abukari and Hani Elsadani, Kenya, ESA</li> </ul>   |
| COM                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cassandra Waldon, Director, Communications Division</li> </ul>  |
| IFAD Management               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations Management Committee (OMC)</li> </ul>  |
| External partners             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anita Kelles-Viitanen, former Senior Gender Consultant</li> <li>• Cheikh Sourang, former IFAD consultant</li> <li>• Geraldine Lecuziat, Nutrition Division, World Food Programme</li> <li>• Giammichele Demaio and Emilio Colonnelli, CFS Secretariat</li> <li>• James Garrett, Senior Research Fellow, Biodiversity International</li> <li>• Nicolas Bidault, Deputy Global Coordinator, UN Network for SUN/REACH</li> <li>• Stineke Oenema, UNSCN Coordinator</li> </ul>  |
| Executive Board Member States | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bangladesh</li> <li>• Canada</li> <li>• Dominican Republic</li> <li>• France</li> <li>• Germany</li> <li>• Ghana</li> </ul>   |

## Appendix

- Hungary
- India
- Iran
- Japan
- Netherlands
- Nigeria
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom





International Fund for Agricultural Development  
Via Paolo di Dono, 44 - 00142 Rome, Italy  
Tel: +39 06 54591 - Fax: +39 06 5043463  
Email: [ifad@ifad.org](mailto:ifad@ifad.org)  
[www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org)

 [facebook.com/ifad](https://facebook.com/ifad)

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