

IFAD and the Nutrition Decade

"Improving the nutritional level of the poorest populations in developing countries" is a principal objective of the Agreement Establishing IFAD. Improving nutrition is thus at the heart of IFAD's work.

IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025 articulates IFAD's contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The overarching goal is that smallholder farmers and rural people overcome poverty and achieve food security through remunerative, sustainable and resilient livelihoods. Nutrition is an essential component of Strategic Objective 1 'Increase rural people's productive capacities', as the approach recognises the importance of nutrition to build, not only productive capacities, but also physical and intellectual capacities, envisioning nutrition not only as an outcome, but also as an essential input for sustainable rural development.

The Nutrition Decade is a strong commitment by UN Member States to undertake a 10 year timeframe of sustained action, bringing together all actors, across all sectors, to join forces and work collectively towards eradicating malnutrition in all its forms. The work programme of the Nutrition Decade, currently being finalised, envisions the following six cross-cutting integrative Action Areas, derived from the recommendations of the ICN2 Framework for Action:

1. Sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets
2. Aligned health systems for universal coverage of essential nutrition actions
3. Social protection and nutrition education
4. Trade and investment for improved nutrition
5. Safe and supportive environments for nutrition at all ages
6. Review, strengthen and promote nutrition governance and accountability

IFAD is committed to contribute concretely and effectively to the Nutrition Decade in support of its Member States. IFAD plays a unique role among the UN Agencies and other development actors committed to improving nutrition. As an international financial institution focused on the needs of smallholder farmers and poor rural people (including women, female and male youth and indigenous peoples), IFAD seeks to improve nutrition by combining solid technical knowledge with the provision of the finance that Governments need to make for lasting and effective investments in nutrition-sensitive agriculture. In addition, by using investments in nutrition-sensitive agriculture to shape food systems as a whole, IFAD's contribution can benefit the entire population, rural and urban alike.

Considering IFAD's comparative advantage, significant contributions can be made to Action Area 1 (Sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets) and Action Area 4 (Trade and investment for improved nutrition) of the Work Programme of the Nutrition Decade. Nevertheless, during the Nutrition Decade IFAD will step up the efforts in mainstreaming of nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and thereby contribute to all 6 Action Areas of the Work Programme.

IFAD's efforts on Mainstreaming Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture are guided by its Nutrition Action Plan 2016-2018¹, which aims to ensure that IFAD's country programmes and projects systematically promote the availability, accessibility, affordability and consumption of diverse, nutritious foods throughout the year. In collaboration with Governments and relevant partners, IFAD intends to contribute to improving the diets and nutritional status of its target group, and shaping more nutrition-sensitive food systems, inter alia, through investments in nutrition-sensitive agriculture, as well as selective engagement in evidence-based policy dialogue, knowledge management and support to capacity development. There are 5 mutually reinforcing Action Areas in the Nutrition Action Plan 2016-2018, which constitute the basis of IFAD's model for nutrition mainstreaming and reflect IFAD's commitments to nutrition. As described below, this model and commitment to nutrition will be intensified and expanded during the Nutrition Decade. Before exposing IFAD's specific commitments, activities and expected results during the Nutrition Decade, a brief overview of the 5 Action Areas of the Nutrition Action Plan is provided below:

IFAD Action Area 1 - Increasing the impact on nutrition of IFAD investments: Operations are the core of IFAD's work, thus the main commitments are devoted to mainstreaming nutrition into investment projects and Country Strategies (COSOPs). This entails applying a systematic nutrition approach to

¹ Action Plan available at: <https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/116/docs/EB-2015-116-INF-5.pdf>

investment projects, a nutrition lens that allows for the identification of opportunities within agriculture and food systems to improve nutrition. The approach to nutrition mainstreaming is inclusive and transformative, ensuring that synergies and complementarities are explored with other mainstreaming dimensions, namely climate change and gender.

IFAD also seeks to steer investments to countries most at need. The Performance-Based Allocation System (PBAS) used to allocate financial resources to developing Member States is being reformed to incorporate a vulnerability variable. This variable includes nutrition dimensions as a way to direct the allocation of resources to countries in highly vulnerable situations.

In addition, enhanced support for nutrition mainstreaming (in terms of technical assistance, capacity building and/or partnership development) will focus on countries identified as most conducive and most in need of nutrition support. This identification is based on the country's nutrition situation, the Government's commitment to nutrition and the status of IFAD's country program.

IFAD Action Areas 2 - Contributing to strengthening capacity in nutrition-sensitive agriculture: successful implementation of nutrition-sensitive projects will require adequate in-country technical, analytical and managerial capacities. Efforts under this Action Area focus on strengthening capacities in existing and upcoming project staff structures.

IFAD Action Area 3 - Advancing policy coherence and advocacy on nutrition: IFAD will engage effectively in nutrition governance mechanisms, policy dialogue and advocacy in order to create an enabling environment for nutrition-sensitive investments.

IFAD Action Area 4 - Building evidence and sharing knowledge: In line with IFAD Development Effectiveness Framework, during the Nutrition Decade IFAD aims to strengthen the evidence base on nutrition-sensitive investments to inform decision making. A robust evidence on impact and results of nutrition-sensitive investments will serve not only to prove results (accountability purposes), but also to improve practice, and learn from IFAD's experience on implementation of nutrition-sensitive projects. This entails combined efforts in the following areas: (i) strengthen monitoring and evaluation frameworks to adequately capture the contribution of agriculture to nutrition and vice versa, by introducing dietary diversity indicators at both project level (Project Logical Frameworks) and corporate level (Results and Impact Management System, RIMS), (ii) conduct rigorous impact assessments of selected nutrition-sensitive projects, and (iii) develop a research agenda and knowledge products to support nutrition-sensitive project design and implementation.

IFAD Action Area 5 - Strengthen organisational capacities at IFAD: in-house capacity on nutrition-sensitive project design and implementation will also be built. Nutrition will therefore feature in the organisation's efforts to build internal capacity, such as the Country Program Manager Academy.

The matrix below summarises IFAD's specific commitments, activities and expected results during the Nutrition Decade. The matrix is organised according to IFAD's 5 Action Areas of the Nutrition Action Plan, indicating also the Action Areas of the Nutrition Decade that each commitment will contribute to. The matrix below also includes prospective commitments, which reflect IFAD's intensification of efforts on nutrition mainstreaming during the Nutrition Decade. These new commitments and activities (identified as such in the matrix) are aligned with the Strategic Objectives of IFAD's Nutrition Action Plan, but are subject to management approval and resource mobilisation.

IFAD Action Area² 1: Increasing the impact on nutrition of IFAD investments

IFAD Commitments	Planned Activities	Expected Results	Action Area Nutrition Decade
1.1 Mainstream nutrition into country strategies and investment projects	<p>Technical assistance is provided for mainstreaming nutrition during the preparation of all new Country Strategic Opportunities Programmes (COSOP)</p> <p>A systematic nutrition approach is applied to the design and implementation of investment projects</p>	<p>By 2018 and from then onwards, all new COSOP include a nutrition situation assessment and specify how the strategic objectives relate to improving nutrition</p> <p>By 2018 and from then onwards, at least one third of all new projects are nutrition sensitive, with explicit nutrition objectives, actions, indicators and integrated pathways for nutrition outcomes</p>	Action Areas 1, 2 ³ , 3, 4, 5 and 6
1.2 Intensify the contribution of agriculture and food systems to nutritious diets	NEW: Investments in nutrient-rich foods (e.g. fruits and vegetables, animal sourced foods, highly nutritious neglected and underutilised crops, biofortified crops, etc.) are promoted within IFAD's projects	NEW: Increased investments in nutrient-rich foods that contribute to enhancing dietary quality for all	Action Areas 1 and 4
1.3 Strengthen engagement with markets and private sector actors to make food systems more nutrition-sensitive	Guidance for design and implementation of nutrition-sensitive value chains is published and disseminated across all Regional Divisions	<p>Nutrition is mainstreamed in IFAD's investments in agricultural value chains (including aspects of food safety, as well as food loss and waste)</p> <p>Partnerships are built between public sector, private sector and rural producer organisations (P4), to better integrate nutrition-sensitive considerations in value chain projects</p>	Action Areas 1 and 4

² The term 'IFAD Action Area' refers to the Action Areas included in the Action Plan 2016-2018 for Mainstreaming Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture at IFAD

³ IFAD's contribution to Action Area 2 of the Nutrition Decade (Aligned health systems for universal coverage of essential nutrition actions) is referred to actions in the context of the 1000 days.

	IFAD Commitments	Planned Activities	Expected Results	Action Area Nutrition Decade
1.4	Strengthen the climate resilience of smallholder farmers and its contribution to improve nutrition of the rural poor	Climate-smart and diversified production and food systems are promoted within IFAD's investment projects to ensure sustainable livelihoods and improved diets to rural families	The diet of rural families is improved significantly through investments in diversified climate-smart production systems	Action Areas 1 and 5
1.5	Promote equality and empowerment of women in ways that help improve nutrition for themselves and their families	<p>Women's role and contribution to improve nutrition are properly analysed and supported in project design and implementation</p> <p>Intensify efforts to target beneficiaries in the window of opportunity (1000 days)</p> <p>NEW: Explore innovative approaches to engage effectively and sustainably women and female youth in nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and nutrition-sensitive value chains (e.g. Grant proposal)</p>	<p>Significant improvement in the diets of women (in particular adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating mothers) and children in project intervention areas</p> <p>Significant improvement in women's empowerment in ways that contribute to nutrition and healthy diets</p>	Action Areas 1 and 3
1.6	Promote behaviour change communication and related nutrition education activities to improve food choices and nutritional practices	Incorporate activities to raise nutrition awareness and promote behaviour change in nutrition-sensitive projects	Women and men participating in IFAD-funded projects have access to better knowledge on nutritious food and personal, food, and environmental hygiene, and are encouraged to put the gained knowledge into practice	Action Area 3
1.7	Learn from indigenous peoples how best to support their traditional food systems to improve their nutrition and to promote biodiversity for sustainable agriculture	<p>NEW: Indigenous Peoples Forum in 2019 envisaged to address indigenous food systems, and the use of biodiversity for nutrition</p> <p>Indigenous peoples' role and contribution to manage sustainably ecosystems and to protect biodiversity through traditional knowledge and methods are properly analysed and supported in project designs</p>	Significant improvement in the diets and food systems of indigenous people in project intervention areas	Action Areas 1 and 3

	IFAD Commitments	Planned Activities	Expected Results	Action Area Nutrition Decade
1.8	NEW: Within IFAD's mandate and scope of interventions, strengthen the contribution of operations to the health determinants of child malnutrition	NEW: Promote the incorporation of water, sanitation and hygiene investments in new or on-going nutrition-sensitive projects, either directly funded by IFAD or in partnership with other institutions	NEW: Improvement in the access to drinking water and/or sanitation facilities of the target population in project intervention areas	Action Areas 2 and 5
1.9	NEW: Focus on reducing food losses in quality and quantity through IFAD production and value chain investments	NEW: Promote the integration of activities addressing food loss during production stages (mainly pest and diseases in the field), postharvest stages (harvesting, drying, processing, transportation, and storage) and food waste at the retailer and consumer end of the food supply chain	NEW: Substantial reduction of food loss and food waste experienced by the target population in project intervention areas	Action Areas 1 and 4

IFAD Action Area 2: Contributing to strengthened capacity in nutrition-sensitive agriculture

	IFAD Commitments	Planned Activities	Expected Results	Action Area Nutrition Decade
2.1	Strengthen the technical, analytical and managerial capacities of implementing partners	<p>Regional workshops and learning events in nutrition-sensitive agriculture for Project staff</p> <p>Pilot a fellowship programme ('Nutrition in Agriculture Fellowships') for young nutrition professionals from developing countries, to build-up the in-country capacity in nutrition-sensitive agriculture</p>	Capacity to implement nutrition-sensitive agricultural investments is built in the existing and upcoming Project staff structures (e.g. nutrition focal points in Program Management Units, or strategic partnerships with specialised organisations)	Action Areas 1, 3, 4 and 5

IFAD Action Area 3: Advancing policy coherence and advocacy on nutrition

	IFAD Commitment	Planned Activities	Expected Results	Action Area Nutrition Decade
3.1	Engage in effective global governance mechanisms for nutrition and promote an enabling environment for nutrition-sensitive investments	<p>Participation in UNSCN and other relevant mechanisms and platforms (such as UN Network for SUN/REACH, CFS/OEWG) is enhanced, promoting UN joint policy coherence, advocacy and action against all forms of malnutrition</p> <p>Active participation in global or regional events and initiatives</p>	<p>Effective chairmanship (2016-2017) and membership of UNSCN</p> <p>Recognized contribution to keeping global attention focused on nutrition</p> <p>Increased and coordinated joint UN action in SUN countries</p>	Action Area 6

3.2	Advocate for the role of agriculture and food in addressing problems of malnutrition, particularly for smallholder farmers and rural women	Country-level engagement is enhanced to support enabling policies, partnerships and action for investments in nutrition-sensitive projects, including the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition Debate and decision-making is promoted on key issues at the nexus food, agriculture, nutrition, climate and gender	Increased policy engagement to create an enabling environment for the implementation of nutrition-sensitive investments in agriculture	Action Area 5 and 6
3.3	Enhance partnerships to increase project impact and support scaling-up	Country-level operational partnerships are strengthened with special attention to sectors outside agriculture and to the private sector	Increased presence of multi-sectoral partnerships for project implementation, and development and scaling-up of the nutrition-sensitive value chain approach	Action Area 4, 5 and 6

IFAD Action Area 4: Building evidence and sharing knowledge

	IFAD Commitment	Planned Activities	Expected Results	Action Area Nutrition Decade
4.1	Generate and use more evidence around nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems	IFAD-specific research agenda around nutrition-sensitive agriculture is formulated and implemented in collaboration with research and knowledge communities Dissemination strategy is developed to promote effective uptake of research and knowledge products	Development and use of guidelines, tools, "how-to-do notes" for staff and consultants' on nutrition-sensitive agriculture Research findings and knowledge translated into easily available, understandable, useful and user-friendly products for project uptake	Action Areas 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6
4.2	Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system of projects to adequately capture the contribution to nutrition	In line with IFAD Development Effectiveness Framework, M&E is strengthened to deliver consistent and reliable information Rigorous impact assessments are conducted	Incorporation of dietary diversity indicators in IFAD's corporate Results and Impact Monitoring System (RIMS) Systematic baseline and/or other relevant nutrition surveys during project cycle	Action Area 6

4.3	Generate and disseminate knowledge on the potential of agrobiodiversity and climate-resilient crops for nutrition	Elaboration of knowledge products that assess the potential of neglected and underutilised species, NUS, to improve nutrition (especially in the context of diet diversity, traditional diets and indigenous peoples), and provision of a practical framework to incorporate NUS into investment projects	Increased investments in neglected and underutilised species in IFAD's investment projects and grants	Action Area 1
4.4	Learn from IFAD's experience in nutrition mainstreaming to strengthen project implementation and develop scaling up trajectories	Study on good practices and lessons learned from nutrition-sensitive agricultural projects, identifying successful models of intervention, implementation arrangements, impact pathways and trajectories for scaling up	Increased understanding of successful nutrition mainstreaming models for replication and scale up	Action Areas 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6

IFAD Action Area 5: Strengthen organisational capacities at IFAD

5.1	Strengthen the technical, analytical and managerial capacities of IFAD staff	Trainings in nutrition-sensitive agriculture for IFAD staff and consultants (e.g. incorporation of nutrition modules in the 'Country Program Manager Academy')	IFAD's organisational capacities to design and supervise nutrition-sensitive agricultural investments are strengthened	Action Areas 1, 3, 4 and 5
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