



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



ROME-BASED AGENCIES' COLLABORATION ON

# Sustainable FOOD VALUE CHAINS *for Nutrition*

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

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

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

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

### RBAs WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES IN 2016 AND 2017

#### a) Development of a framework on NSVCs

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

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

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

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

#### b) Dissemination and validation of NSVC framework

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

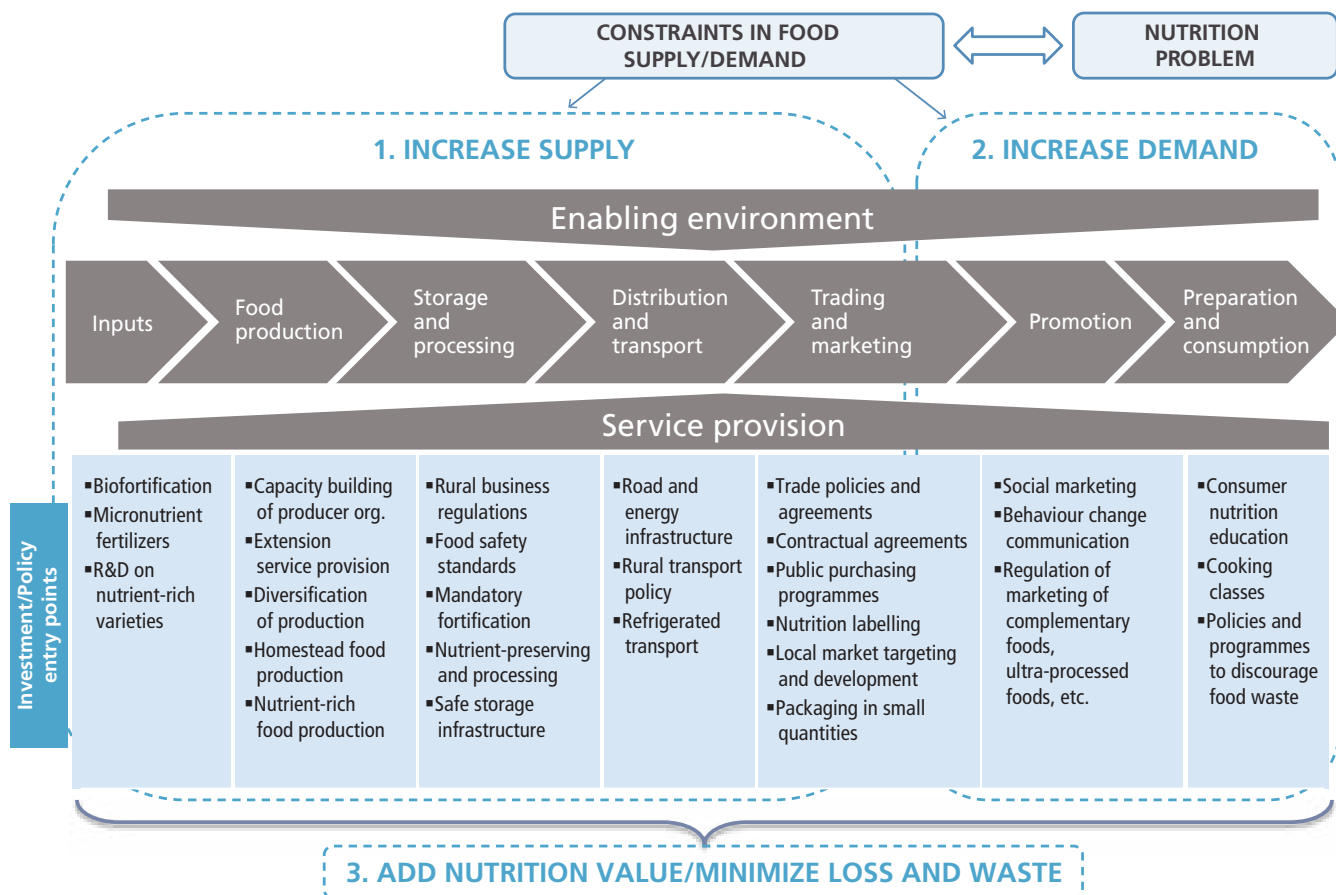
---

<sup>1</sup> De la Peña, I., Garrett, J. & Gelli, A. 2018. *Nutrition-sensitive value chains from a smallholder perspective: a framework for project design*. Rome, IFAD. The framework draws on, among others, Gelli, A., Hawkes, C., Donovan, J., Harris, J., Allen, S.L., De Brauw, A., Henson, S., Johnson, N., Garrett, J. & Ryckembusch, D. 2015. *Value chains and nutrition: a framework to support the identification, design and evaluation of interventions*. IFPRI Discussion Paper 01413. Washington DC.

<sup>2</sup> See FAO Committee on World Food Security. 2016. *Inclusive value chains for sustainable agriculture and scaled up food security and nutrition outcomes – background document*. September. CFS 2016/43/Inf. 21. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mr587e.pdf>

FIGURE 1

**Nutrition-sensitive value chain framework, strategies and potential interventions**



Source: adapted from De la Peña, I., Garrett, J. & Gelli, A. 2018. *Nutrition-sensitive value chains from a smallholder perspective: a framework for project design*. Rome, IFAD.

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

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

## THE WAY FORWARD FOR RBAs COLLABORATION ON NSVCs

- In 2018, the “Nutrition-sensitive value chains: a guide for project design” will be available. Developed by IFAD and field-tested in Nigeria and Indonesia, both the guide and the approach, methods and tools used during the field testing have been discussed and validated through technical consultations at country and global level.
- FAO is leading the development of a joint RBAs e-learning module on NSVCs, based on the forthcoming IFAD guide, FAO’s Sustainable Food Value Chain Framework and on the experience of the agencies.
- The RBAs will seek to partner with governments, development agencies and others to facilitate development of NSVCs at country level. Collaboration around institutional procurement for healthy diets and development of gender-sensitive VCs constitute promising opportunities to bring together the technical knowledge, finance and logistical support that the RBAs can provide.
- Under WFP leadership, the Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) Resource Framework will be published in 2018. The Resource Framework harmonizes existing knowledge and tools, builds on the wealth of expertise of the partners on HGSF and further fosters partnerships to help governments achieve their goals.



### Contacts:

**Florence Tartanac**

[Florence.Tartanac@fao.org](mailto:Florence.Tartanac@fao.org)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

**Isabel De la Peña**

[I.Delapena@ifad.org](mailto:I.Delapena@ifad.org)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

**David Ryckembusch**

[David.Ryckembusch@wfp.org](mailto:David.Ryckembusch@wfp.org)

World Food Programme (WFP)

**James Garrett**

[J.Garrett@cgiar.org](mailto:J.Garrett@cgiar.org)

Bioversity International

### Photo credits:

©FAO/Hkun Lat

©Sebastian Liste/NOOR for FAO

©FAO/Riccardo Gangale

©FAO/Khatia Gogoladze

©FAO/Giulio Napolitano

©FAO/L. Raymond

©FAO/Liliane Kambirigi (back)