

# Fill the Nutrient Gap

Developed by the UN World Food Programme (WFP), with inputs from IFPRI, University of California Davis, Harvard University, Epicentre, Mahidol University, UNICEF and Save the Children

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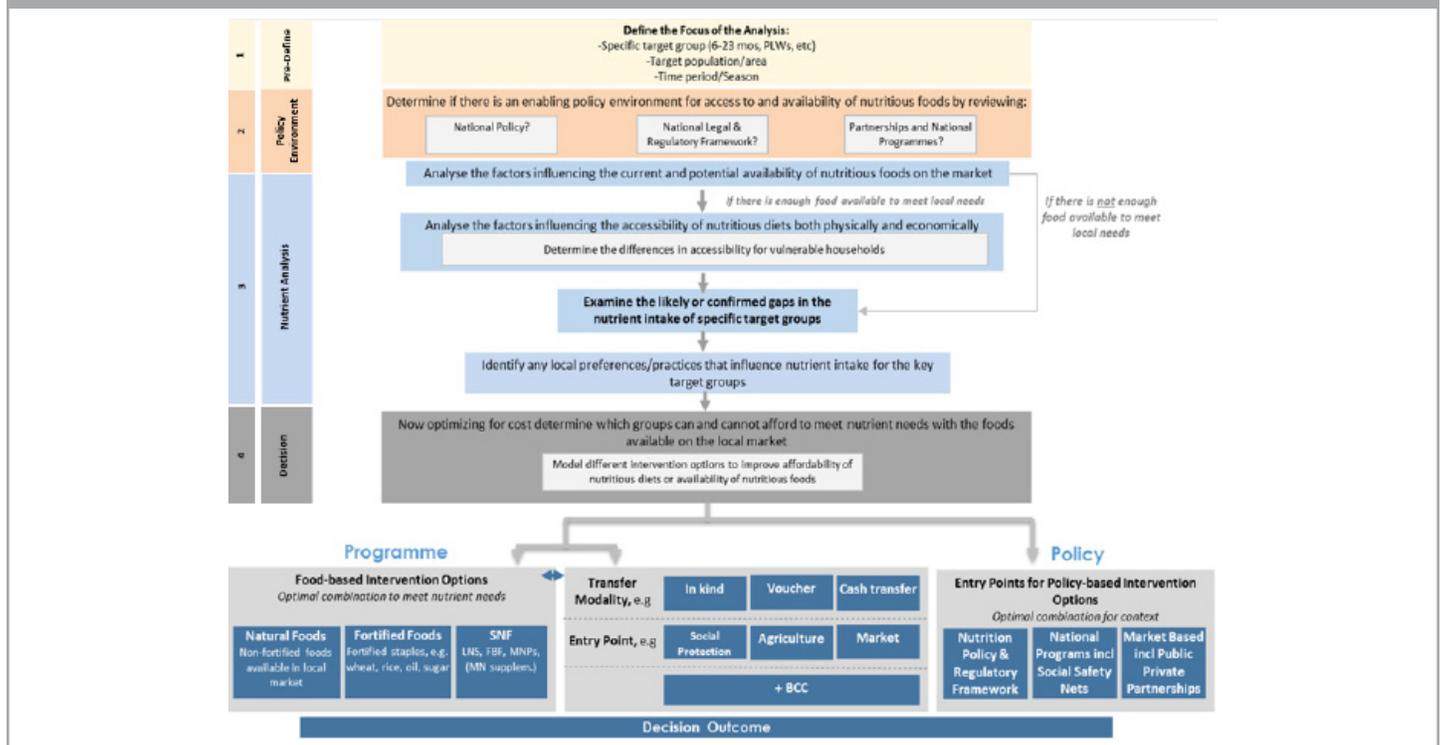
## Summary

Advancing national multi-sectoral nutrition policies and programming can greatly benefit from an assessment of opportunities and challenges for meeting nutrient requirements of key target groups, as this is a prerequisite for preventing malnutrition. The Fill the Nutrient Gap (FNG) provides a framework for strengthened situation analysis and multisectoral decision making that identifies context-appropriate nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions that can improve nutrient intake among specific target groups and engages different sectors in this process. The analysis leverages secondary sources of data and information on factors that directly or indirectly impact on whether people can access and consume nutritious foods, and ultimately, whether they meet

recommended nutrient intakes. The Cost of the Diet tool, developed by Save the Children, is used to estimate the lowest cost of a nutritious diet based on locally available foods and its affordability based on current food expenditure of the population. This consolidated information is reviewed by a multi-sectoral group of stakeholders to come to a shared understanding of the issues, context and solutions to improve access to a nutritious diet. Through this consultation process, context-specific optimal policy and programme actions including possible entry points for interventions are jointly identified for different sectors (e.g. health, social protection, agriculture, food processing, education) and by stakeholders from both public and private sector.

## Fill the Nutrient Gap: Nutrition Situation Analysis Framework and Decision Tool

Figure 1: The Fill the Nutrient Gap Framework for situation analysis and decision making





## Key Questions Addressed

What are the context-specific bottlenecks and opportunities, across sectors, that can be leveraged to improve access to nutritious foods in order to meet nutrient requirements of key target groups, which is a pre-requisite for preventing malnutrition?



## How does this help nutrition decision making?

The FNG situation analysis provides a better understanding of the need for nutritious foods and which these are, and of the role of the food system and the social protection system to increase availability and physical and economic access to such foods, in addition to the health system and education system that can e.g. increase awareness, demand and provide distribution platforms for nutritious foods and supplements. Stakeholders from different sectors participate in the identification of data sources and the review of the findings, which they then use for decision making for policies, strategies and programs. As such, the FNG is a systems-focused situation analysis that brings both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive sectors on board for multi-sectoral decision making for prioritization of policies and strategies towards improving nutrition.



## What are the data needs?

The FNG analysis is based on secondary data on factors that directly or indirectly relate to supply, access and demand for nutritious foods and trends of malnutrition indicators over time, disaggregated by geographic area, wealth quintiles etc. Typically, 100-200 sources of information and data are identified per country and much of the value of the FNG analysis lies in the triangulation of information that is not typically brought together. For the Cost of the Diet analysis, food prices for at least 60 foods from a range of food groups is required, which can come from secondary sources such as household expenditure surveys or food price monitoring, or they need to be collected through market surveys. In addition, household food expenditure data are required.



## What technical resources are needed to implement this tool?

The FNG analysis and decision making process are requested by countries, e.g. the SUN Focal Point, Ministry of Health or Ministry of Social Protection. This 'country champion', together with a technical working group and a large stakeholder platform (e.g. SUN networks) prepare for the FNG process, recommend data sources, validate and review the findings and formulate recommendations for policies and strategies. The FNG analysis itself, including the Cost of the Diet analysis and modeling, is conducted by WFP's FNG team that also guides the in-country process. The technical working group often includes representatives of the bureau of statistics, key nutrition stakeholders from government, UN, academia, civil society, private sector (e.g. SUN business network) and the WFP country office.



## How long does it take?

The FNG analysis takes approximately 6 months, but can be extended over a longer period to be aligned with key policy formulation processes and dissemination opportunities.



## Strengths and limitations?

**Strengths:** By focusing on improving nutrient intake, the contribution from both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions can be reviewed and compared. Furthermore, through the systems approach and the review of context specific data, the focus is on interventions that address the main obstacles that consumers / households face with regard to being able to source nutritious foods, as opposed to educating them to optimize what they do within the boundaries of their constraints (such as lack of market access, low crop yields, nonavailability of adequately nutritious foods for young children).

**Limitations:** The FNG analysis uses secondary data and sources of information and is hence limited to what is available. The same is true for the expenditure data that are used to calculate affordability of a nutritious diet. It is also important to realize that the FNG and Cost of the Diet analysis take a household/ consumer perspective to identifying which options are most cost-effective to improve access to required nutrients and do not estimate the costs of providing the interventions.

Learn more at:

<https://www.nyas.org/NMC>

