SYNTHESIS REPORT

Emerging Findings on Areas of Opportunity to Support Greater Use of Economic Evidence for Multisectoral Nutrition Strategies

December 2020

Acknowledgements

This report was created under the “Strengthening Economic Evaluation for Multisectoral Strategies for Nutrition” (SEEMS-Nutrition) initiative. SEEMS-Nutrition is a three-year initiative to strengthen evidence of the costs and benefits of multisectoral nutrition strategies. It is led by Project Director Carol Levin from the University of Washington Department of Global Health, with Helen Keller International (HKI), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), and Results for Development (R4D) and with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

This report was prepared by Mary D’Alimonte, Laura Becker, Susan Wang, Kyle Borces, Natasha Ledlie, and Augustin Flory at R4D. The team is grateful to the stakeholders who took part in the online SEEMS survey and the in-depth consultations, members of the Policy Advisory Group, and Project Director, Carol Levin.
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## Acronyms

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMGF</td>
<td>Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIFF</td>
<td>Children’s Investment Fund Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DALY</td>
<td>Disability adjusted life years</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development, United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DI</td>
<td>Development Initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>Economic evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAC</td>
<td>Global Affairs Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIZ</td>
<td>German Agency for International Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>HKI</td>
<td>Helen Keller International</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICAN</td>
<td>International Coalition for Advocacy on Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFPRI</td>
<td>International Food Policy Research Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>International Rescue Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCC</td>
<td>Millennium Challenge Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>N4G</td>
<td>Nutrition for Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>Nutrition International</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norad</td>
<td>Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAG</td>
<td>Policy Advisory Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>PoN</td>
<td>Power of Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QALY</td>
<td>Quality adjusted life years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEEMS</td>
<td>Strengthening Economic Evaluation for Multisectoral Strategies for Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDN</td>
<td>SUN Donor Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>Scaling Up Nutrition Movement Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKRI</td>
<td>United Kingdom Research and Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

Governments and their partners are constantly faced with decisions on how to best prioritize, allocate resources to, plan, and implement nutrition interventions in the context of their overall budget. Many important questions are asked throughout the decision-making process, such as: what budget is available? How much will it cost? What will the impact be? How do we choose between different programs and interventions and ensure a strong return on investment? In answering these questions, they may use economic evaluation data and analyses to help guide them in their decision-making. Economic evaluations can be important tools for prioritization of interventions by comparing costs relative to the expected benefits of those interventions. In resource-constrained settings, these evaluations can be critical inputs into key decisions around resource allocation among country governments and development partners.

1.1. Case studies on the use of economic evaluation data

To better understand how economic evaluations can directly influence decision-making, a few case studies for each type of economic evaluation are presented in Table 1 below. These outline the scope of economic evaluations that are being explored in this report.

Table 1: Description of types of economic evaluations with case study examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Economic Evaluation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Case Study Examples</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Cost-effectiveness analysis | Compares the net costs and benefits of alternative interventions, where benefits are measured as natural units. (e.g., deaths or disease cases averted). | ¶ An example is when a cost-effectiveness analysis study was used to decide whether vitamin A supplements should be distributed universally to all children 6-59 months, targeted broadly to children suffering from mild/moderate/severe malnutrition, or targeted narrowly to preschoolers with moderate/severe malnutrition\(^1\). The study found that vitamin A should be provided to all preschoolers via universal distribution since it was found to have the lowest cost per death averted of $67, when compared to alternative strategies of broad targeting ($144 per death averted) or narrow targeting ($257 per death averted).

¶ Another example is when a research study was conducted to assess the cost-effectiveness of three cash-based interventions in Pakistan: double cash (DC) transfer, standard cash (SC) transfer, and fresh food voucher (FFV) transfer. The study found that SC and FFV were more cost-effective than the DC intervention, since both SC and FFV had low costs per case of stunting averted ($882 for SC, $883 for FFV, and $1290 for DC)\(^2\). |

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### Cost-utility analysis

Cost-utility analysis compares net costs and benefits of alternative interventions, where benefits are measured by a health metric that combines death and disability into a single health metric called quality-adjusted life-year (QALY) or disability-adjusted life year (DALY).

- In one example, a cost-utility analysis was used to determine whether the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme’s Anganwadi community health workers could work efficiently with community health workers to increase the prevention and treatment coverage for acute malnutrition in slums in India. The estimated cost of $23 per DALY averted was considered highly cost effective, as compared to India’s GDP per capita threshold and consistent with similar CUA studies among peer countries.

### Cost-benefit analysis

Cost-benefit analysis compares net costs and benefits where the benefits are assigned a monetary value to the measure of an outcome by alternative interventions. The analysis can be used for new program development or scale-up of an existing intervention.

- For example, the Copenhagen Consensus used cost-benefit analysis across three different nutrition interventions to help address anemia and micronutrient deficiencies in Haiti. Their results found that Fortification of wheat flour with folic acid came out with a high benefit-cost ratio estimate and were published in their report, Preventative Nutrition Interventions. The results led to the creation of Haiti’s first food fortification program, RANFOSE.

### Costing minimization

Costing minimization collects and analyzes the cost of an intervention compared to the current standard of care assuming that the expected outcomes are the same.

- In pharmacology, cost minimization can be used to compare two products that are equivalent in therapeutic effect and dose, to project the least costly drug or therapeutic modality.

### Cost-efficiency analysis

Cost-efficiency analysis measures the cost per outcome or output achieved by an intervention.

- The International Rescue Committee (IRC) compared the cost efficiency of its cash and non-food item programs (NFIs), to better understand the trade-offs between both.

  - The analysis considered seven NFI distribution programs from six countries, examining the necessary components for each program’s implementation, the cost of each program per dollar of value transferred, and how cost efficiency is influenced by contextual and programmatic factors.

  - The analysis found that when comparing programs of the same scale in the same region, cash transfer programs were more cost-efficient than NFI programs, and as a

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3 Goudet et al. “Cost Effectiveness of a Community Based Prevention and Treatment of Acute Malnutrition Programme in Mumbai Slums, India.” PloS One, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Nov. 2018


1.2. Economic evaluations of multisectoral nutrition

As illustrated in the above examples, the economic rationale can influence policies as well as decisions on whether to invest or continue investing in certain interventions. While some sectors have existing evidence to draw on, the evidence generated by economic evaluation of multisectoral nutrition interventions has been limited overall. Currently, use has been mostly restricted to nutrition-specific interventions, but there remains a gap in availability and measurement of economic evidence behind multisectoral or nutrition-sensitive approaches.

The key challenge, as highlighted by the Agriculture, Nutrition & Health (ANH) Academy, is capturing all costs and benefits in nutrition-sensitive interventions that cross different sectors (e.g. WASH, gender, agriculture) due to a few reasons:

I. The effects of multisectoral interventions may not arise immediately, and it may be challenging to measure or estimate future spillover effects.

II. Cost-effectiveness analysis focuses on the least costly way to produce an outcome or good or service, often leaving out other costs and benefits, such as social costs and benefits across sectors.

III. Additionally, when it comes to multisectoral nutrition-sensitive interventions, stakeholders are faced with only a limited number of models to help estimate benefits and costs, and they lack reliable benchmark comparisons to use.

This combination of challenges points towards a significant gap, which if addressed, has great potential to support decisions around planning, advocacy, resource allocation, and policymaking for nutrition-sensitive interventions.

2. Objectives of SEEMS Workstream 3

To address this gap, SEEMS Nutrition aims to develop a common approach for assessing the costs and benefits of multisectoral nutrition strategies, building upon standard economic evaluation methods, and applying it to on-going or planned pilot projects and large-scale interventions.

R4D is leading the implementation of Workstream 3 under SEEMS-Nutrition, which focuses on engaging policymakers, funders, advocates, and other stakeholders to ensure that the SEEMS-Nutrition common approach and its outputs respond to the needs of decision-makers and are used by them. The main objectives of this synthesis report are:

I. To define and understand the use cases of economic evaluation data for multisectoral nutrition programming.

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7 Ruel et al. “Nutrition-sensitive agriculture: what have we learned so far?” Global Food Security, Jun. 2018
II. To understand barriers to uptake of economic evaluation data being used for decision-making in nutrition and explore approaches to increase the use of such data.

III. To explore areas of collaboration with partners or stakeholder platforms that can be targeted to increase demand and potential funding sources for economic evaluation research.

By recognizing how stakeholders use economic evaluation data and the challenges they currently face in accessing and using this data, SEEMS-Nutrition can better address the decision-making needs of key stakeholders as the project further develops the SEEMS-Nutrition common approach for nutrition-sensitive interventions.

3. Purpose of the synthesis report

To fulfill the objectives above, three approaches were used to solicit information from various stakeholders: (1) an online survey was distributed to the multi-sectoral nutrition community targeting individuals who make decisions to invest, plan, advocate, or set policies for nutrition; (2) the SEEMS-Nutrition Policy Advisory Group (PAG), comprised of representatives from USAID, World Bank, AfDB, Big Win Philanthropy, MCC, BMGF, SUN Secretariat, IFPRI, PATH MQSUN+, HKI, and WFP, was convened to discuss emerging findings from this online survey as part of their role in ensuring policy relevance of the project outputs; and (3) a series of in-depth consultations were conducted with partners to identify use cases of economic evaluation data for nutrition, unpack challenges in using such data, and find opportunities for collaboration to ensure uptake of SEEMS outputs.

This document will be a “live” knowledge management tool for the internal SEEMS-Nutrition team that synthesizes information we’ve heard from partners to be updated periodically. Based on our in-depth consultations, we provide a deep dive into each interviewed organization, which are grouped by organization type:

- Donors and Development Banks
- UN Agencies and Networks
- Implementing Partners and Technical Assistance Providers
- Advocacy and Policy

In these interviews, we outline our key findings upfront along with a summary of the consultation, which is organized as follows:

- **Use cases**: we asked stakeholders to tell us how their institutions use economic evaluations to support decision-making in nutrition
- **Data challenges and gaps**: challenges or gaps that stakeholders mentioned when using economic evaluation data
- **Key audiences and funding**: specific audiences that will be interested in using SEEMS-Nutrition outputs and have the potential to fund future economic evaluation research
- **Areas of opportunity to collaborate**: potential opportunities to collaborate with each partner around knowledge sharing and dissemination

Please see Annex 1 for more detailed notes on the areas outlined above for each interviewed organization.
4. Summary of Key Takeaways

The key takeaways from our research and consultations are:

1. **The use of economic evaluation data for multisectoral nutrition decisions varies across stakeholders, including some who do not use this information but may still consider it valuable.** The use of economic evaluation data is based on the individual mandate of each organization. For example, donors may use data from economic evaluations to inform their future investments while advocacy organizations use this data for resource mobilization. Additionally, some partners may not use economic evaluation evidence for decision-making given their limited availability.

2. **Institutions reported facing challenges around the availability of economic evaluation data for nutrition, the relevance of the evidence to projects or programs, and the interpretation of economic evaluation data.** The availability of economic evaluation evidence is typically very limited and even when the data is available, it is typically from other geographies or different types of nutrition programs that can have different contexts. Also, target audiences such as policymakers cannot easily access or interpret economic evaluation data since they may not necessarily have the technical backgrounds to understand how to apply them to their programs.

3. **Private philanthropies and bilateral donors may have more capacity to fund more economic evaluation research compared to other stakeholders such as country governments or multilateral institutions.** Some private foundations (such as BMGF and CIFF) or bilateral donors (such as DFID⁹, GIZ, and Norad) have previously funded economic evaluation research or expressed interest in funding future economic evaluation research. We also heard that while country governments would find SEEMS-Nutrition outputs to be very helpful in resource allocation decisions or advocacy campaigns, they typically cannot fund these activities since countries have limited budgets and are more focused on the implementation of programs.

4. **Some bilateral actors such as GIZ and USAID have shown interest in applying the SEEMS framework to ongoing nutrition-sensitive projects.** GIZ and USAID have ongoing nutrition-sensitive projects that they would like to better measure costs and benefits for and have expressed interest in learning more about the SEEMS-Nutrition common approach to potentially apply it to their current projects.

5. **To improve the uptake of economic evaluation data, there is a need for targeted engagement of key stakeholders and platforms that can potentially fund future economic evaluations, clear guidance on the methodology of the SEEMS-Nutrition common approach, and tailored dissemination towards target audiences.** To improve the availability of economic evaluation data, there needs to be targeted engagement of key stakeholders that have a clear use case for the SEEMS-Nutrition common approach and have the fiscal capacity to fund future economic evaluations of multisectoral nutrition programs. There is also a need for clear guidance in the SEEMS-Nutrition common approach around the variability of country contexts and the multiple impact pathways of nutrition-sensitive interventions. Lastly, economic evaluation findings need to be presented and disseminated in a way that speaks to different audiences, especially to

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⁹The Department for International Development (DFID) has been replaced by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and may go through a significant shift in its way of working.
policymakers who may need less technical outputs but more context around how to apply these to their work.

Each of the five takeaways above will be elaborated upon in the next section by providing more background and examples, where possible, based on our consultations and survey results.

4.1. **Use Cases**

Unpacking the existing use cases for economic evaluations is important for understanding how the research in this area currently feeds into key decision-making processes. A blog post by Mary D’Alimonte and Laura Becker shows that economic evaluation data can improve how different sectors work together to plan and implement nutrition interventions, and ensure efficient use of funds, across the planning cycle. Using the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) policy and budget management cycle as a frame of reference as shown in Figure 1, they identified how economic evidence can better support the annual planning process:

**Figure 1: Scaling Up Nutrition Planning and Budget Management Cycle**

1. **Policy review:** Evidence on return on investment and cost-effectiveness can persuade government leaders and parliamentarians to make new commitments and/or continue to strengthen efforts. This can lead to the formation of new policy agendas that open opportunities for sectors to do more for nutrition.

2. **Strategic planning:** Line ministries are better enabled to formulate annual and multi-year plans with evidence on what interventions work, at what cost, and with what kind of expected return on investment.

3. **Cost estimation:** Cost data is a useful input into budgeting for programs as well as for making allocation decisions for earmarking fiscal transfers.
4. **Prioritization**: Information on cost-effectiveness can help determine which interventions to prioritize by identifying interventions that are deemed most effective at the lowest cost.

5. **Budget formulation**: Knowing the costs and relative level of prioritization of different interventions (based on steps 3 and 4 above), budget holders can make more informed decisions on how to allocate funding under a constrained envelope to invest more in programs proven to work, at a low cost, and with a high economic return.

6. **Budget execution and implementation**: Implementation decisions, such as how to deliver services, can be strengthened by knowing whether cost and impact differ depending on the platform used to deliver the service.

7. **Accounting and monitoring & audit and evaluation**: With a stronger idea of which interventions work across sectors, data systems can be targeted to track progress on implementation, impact, and resource mobilization to feed information back into the annual planning process. Routine resource tracking across sectors can support strategic planning by identifying and leveraging existing platforms and budgets to add nutrition-sensitive components.

8. **Resource mobilization, advocacy, and communication (throughout)**: Advocacy for increased action and funding for nutrition is strengthened with evidence of cost-effectiveness and return on investment.

However, economic evaluations are not always used for decision-making in nutrition. According to the SEEMS-Nutrition survey, the return on investment was the least used criterion when investing or making decisions related to nutrition as shown in Figure 2. The top considerations when evaluating nutrition interventions were their available budget and total cost of the intervention.

**Figure 2: Decision criteria used by online survey respondents when evaluation nutrition interventions**

![Figure 2: Decision criteria used by online survey respondents when evaluation nutrition interventions](image)

This may be due to donors being under-represented in our SEEMS-Nutrition survey sample as shown in Figure 3. Compared to other stakeholders, donors (including International Financing Institutions like the World Bank, for example) tend to look more closely at the return on investment as a criterion when evaluating potential new investments.
This finding was also consistent with our stakeholder consultations as some partners mentioned that they do not necessarily use economic evaluations in their decision-making process due to its general lack of availability, as well as methodological challenges in applying economic evaluation data to different country contexts. Some stakeholders noted that economic evaluations may be one of the many factors considered in their decisions. Other factors considered could include alignment of the investment with organizational priorities or ease of implementation of the project, which may be deemed more important by comparison.

As shown in Figure 4, however, there are development partners who cited how economic evaluations were a critical input into their decisions around strategic planning, program-level planning, and advocacy support. These include:

**Figure 4: Main use case categories cited by stakeholder consultations, including those with limited use for economic evaluations (EE)**

- **Strategic planning** (n=5)
  - “Strategy formation and selecting priority areas to work in child survival, nutrition and reproductive health. This is based on executive review on what works, impact, gaps, and cost-effectiveness” – CIFF

- **Program-level planning** (n=6)
  - “We have been working to improve the evidence base via cost-effectiveness analysis for adoption of multiple micronutrient supplementation for pregnant women in programs” – Nutrition International

- **Advocacy support** (n=4)
  - “We use it to clearly outline the economic rationale for nutrition by making an argument that nutrition is cost-effective with concrete examples” – 1000 Days

- **Limited use of EE data** (n=4)
  - “We don’t necessarily use cost and benefit data in investment decisions for nutrition, but highly value the use of this data in their advocacy and policy work” – Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Strategic planning – At the sector level, economic evaluation data is used to inform strategic decisions around priority sectors or programmatic areas to work in among donors or national governments. For example, donors such as the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) use this evidence to inform how they plan and allocate their portfolio of investments in terms of which priority areas to work in such as child survival, nutrition, or reproductive health.

Program-level planning – At the program level, this data is useful for deciding which nutrition activities/interventions should be prioritized based on the costs and expected benefits/outcomes of planned activities. By identifying which interventions/programs maximize impact at a lower cost, decision-makers can be more efficient in their use of resources. For example, Nutritional International (NI) has been conducting a cost-effectiveness analysis of multiple micronutrient supplementation (MMS) among pregnant women to support the prioritization of MMS as a planned intervention by building up its evidence base. In another example, DFID requires Value for Money (VFM) assessments before, during, and sometimes after its investments as part of their grantmaking process.

Advocacy support – This information is also important for resource mobilization efforts by clearly outlining the rationale for further investments in multisectoral nutrition interventions. For example, advocacy organizations such as 1000 Days can better make the case for nutrition-sensitive interventions among policymakers if economic evaluation evidence is more readily available.

Figure 5 below lists the organizations, by organization type, who use economic evaluation data for the various use-case categories above.

Figure 5: Breakdown of the main use case categories by organization name

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11 GiveWell, in addition to being an INGO, also funds some projects via their incubation fund.
Through the online survey, we also found that there is significant variability across stakeholders in terms of the types of economic evaluations used, the sources used to access economic evaluation data, and the nutrition modeling tools used for decision-making. This seems to indicate that there is no standard economic evaluation approach or tool currently used by organizations to inform their decision-making. As shown in Figure 6, the SEEMS survey found that cost-effectiveness analysis seems to be the most used economic evaluation for nutrition followed by cost-benefit analysis, with about 65% of surveyed decision-makers supporting and/or using cost-effectiveness data in their current roles, followed by 51% for cost-benefit analysis. Additionally, there does not seem to be a single indicative source for obtaining economic evaluation data. Some respondents reported relying on data from primary data collection for impact (59%) and costs (41%), while others mainly rely on published academic literature (55%). Lastly, as shown in Figure 7, a wide variety of nutrition modeling tools seem to be used for decision-making with the top tools being the Cost of the Diet tool (29%) and the Lives Saved Tool (22%) but also noting that about 19% of survey respondents reported not using nutrition modeling tools at all.

Figure 6: Types of economic evaluations and data sources used by nutrition decision-makers according to the SEEMS survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Evaluation</th>
<th>Support or Use in Current Role (n=104)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost-effectiveness</td>
<td>68 (65%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost-benefit*</td>
<td>53 (51%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost-efficiency</td>
<td>38 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost or cost minimalization</td>
<td>32 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost-utility</td>
<td>19 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None, I do not typically use cost data</td>
<td>15 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11 (11%)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Obtained Data (n=104)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary data collection of impact</td>
<td>61 (59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published academic literature</td>
<td>57 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary data collection of costs</td>
<td>43 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published M&amp;E reports from programs</td>
<td>41 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy materials/policy briefs</td>
<td>33 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank reports</td>
<td>32 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None, I do not typically use these data</td>
<td>8 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13 (13%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.2. Data Use Challenges

Based on our consultations, respondents cited a variety of challenges related to economic evaluation data in multisectoral nutrition. These included low availability of data, high contextual variability, accounting for multiple impact pathways, lack of a standardized framework, low quality of data, costs of research, and difficulty in interpreting the data (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Challenges reported with economic evaluation data in nutrition by stakeholders

Based on in-depth interviews

“Availability of evidence on cost effectiveness and cost-benefit of nutrition sensitive and multi-sectoral approaches is still limited”

“Results from economic and financial analyses will vary by country context and depends on the delivery platform for the intervention”

“Many political/humanitarian decisions are not made based on cost-benefit data, partly because evidence is not readily available and partly because it’s hard to access/interpret”

“A big challenge is how to account for multiple benefits – e.g. many nutrition-sensitive interventions have multiple benefits including nutrition”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges reported</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low availability of EE data</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual variability when applying EE data derived from other countries or programs</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition-sensitive actions have multiple impact pathways</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No agreed upon framework/guidance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low quality of EE data</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating EE data is time-consuming and costly</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE data is not straightforward to access and interpret</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Types of nutrition modeling tools used by nutrition decision-makers

- Cost of the Diet (CoTD): 30 (29%)
- Lives Saved Tool (LST): 23 (22%)
- PROFILES: 17 (16%)
- Optima Nutrition: 16 (15%)
- Outcome Modeling for Nutrition Impact (OMNI) Tool: 12 (12%)
- Cost of the Double Burden: 11 (11%)
- Optifood: 6 (6%)
- MINIMOD: 4 (4%)
- Intake Modeling and Prediction Program (IMAPP): 3 (3%)
- Other: 13 (13%)
- None: 20 (19%)

Do you use any of the following nutrition modeling tools or their outputs for decision-making? (n=104)
The main challenges reported can be grouped into issues around availability of economic evaluation data for nutrition, the relevance of economic evaluation data for nutrition, quality of these data, and interpretation of the data. We discussed different potential drivers through our consultations with stakeholders and the PAG as to why these challenges may exist (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Potential drivers of challenges related to economic evaluation data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential drivers</th>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Contextual variability</th>
<th>Impact pathways</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Absence of data, extremely limited data, and/or difficulty in accessing the data</td>
<td>Comparing the same intervention across different delivery platforms or contexts</td>
<td>How to evaluate the combined impact of multiple interventions</td>
<td>Quality of evidence is insufficient</td>
<td>Policymakers may have trouble understanding very technical analyses/evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficult to promote collection of this data when there are budget constraints; M&amp;E plans seldomly collect cost data</td>
<td>Country variability in delivery platforms, program design, costs, and policy environment; Variation in multisectoral nutrition programs</td>
<td>Difficulty in attributing individual contributions of various program interventions, and measuring the combined impact of multiple impact pathways</td>
<td>Lack of a reliable, consistent methodology</td>
<td>Policymakers from different sectors do not speak the language of other sectors, have differing priorities, and may not be as technical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Availability**
   - The right data often does not exist, and it can also be difficult to promote the collection of this data when there are political and budget constraints. Respondents suggested that either cost data or impact data is typically collected, but rarely both, which challenges the ability to conduct full economic evaluations of nutrition interventions.
   - As such, the overall lack of available economic evaluation data means that it is not utilized as an input into decision-making.

2. **Contextual variability**
   - From a methods standpoint, comparing the same intervention across different country contexts can be difficult due to inherent differences in costs, delivery platforms, policy environments, or program design.
   - Making cross-country comparisons can be difficult across geographic regions, countries, and even within countries especially when baseline target levels and policy environments can significantly vary. What works in one country may or may not be replicable or even feasible in another context.
   - Costs also significantly vary based on country contexts while potential impact can also be affected by coverage of the delivery platform used. As such, policymakers may not be convinced by evidence from other countries.

3. **Impact pathways**
It is challenging to separate the individual contributions of nutrition interventions when they are several steps removed from a single identifiable impact and there may be multiple contributing factors.

Multi-sectoral nutrition programs could have a wide array of potential impact pathways in several sectors.

4. **Quality**
- There is no reliable or consistent framework being used for conducting economic evaluations of nutrition-sensitive interventions, which can result in the variable quality of research outputs.

5. **Interpretation**
- Decision-makers including policymakers may have trouble understanding or accessing very technical evidence presented by economic evaluation studies.
- Specifically, policymakers from nutrition-relevant line ministries or planning and budgeting ministries have their own set of priorities and it could be difficult for them to understand the relevance and technical analyses of nutrition evidence.

### 4.3. Financing Economic Evaluations

We explored potential funding opportunities for economic evaluations using the SEEMS-Nutrition framework. By identifying audiences we can better engage these partners to share the SEEMS-Nutrition common approach, apply the framework to existing projects, and potentially fund future evaluations of multisectoral nutrition approaches. We found that private and bilateral donors have more capacity to fund economic evaluation research relative to other types of stakeholders such as multilateral institutions or country governments.

I. **Bilateral donors** – Some bilateral donors that have previously funded economic evaluation studies in the past include Norad (Norway), DfID (UK), and GIZ (Germany). DfID requires economic evaluations as part of their assessment of potential investments to assess program costs and expected accompanying impact. Donors who have already placed some level of priority on economic evaluations as being part of their assessment process should be prioritized for engagement.

II. **Private foundations** – The main private foundations that have invested in research studies are the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF). BMGF significantly invests in research activities including economic evaluations and should be a key stakeholder to engage. Though to a lesser extent, CIFF has also invested in economic evaluation research activities in the past and could be amenable to providing continued R&D investments.

III. **Country governments** – While country governments will find economic evaluation data to be valuable, they typically have limited capacity to fund research studies since they’re typically focused on service delivery or implementation of programs.

IV. **Multilateral donors** – While multilateral actors were mentioned less than bilateral and private philanthropies, there may be some opportunities for funding through vertical funds and trust funds at some multilaterals like the World Bank.
Targeted engagement with specific stakeholders that have a clear use case for the SEEMS-Nutrition framework such as Norad, DfID, GIZ, CIFF, USAID, and BMGF can help improve funding for and availability of economic evaluation data.

4.4. Potential collaborations
We asked stakeholders about potential opportunities for collaboration between the SEEMS-Nutrition project and their respective organizations to increase uptake and dissemination of project outputs. Almost all consultations wanted to learn more about the SEEMS-Nutrition common approach, and some bilateral donors showed interest in applying the SEEMS-Nutrition framework to their ongoing nutrition-sensitive projects.

I. **External presentation on SEEMS common approach**: There is a high interest in learning more about the SEEMS common approach since the majority of interviewees indicated interest in having a webinar or external presentation to learn more about the SEEMS approach and accompanying country case studies. Most organizations want to learn more about the assumptions behind the technical framework to be reviewed by their relevant internal teams before engaging further.

II. **Training or methods workshop**: There was also some interest in organizing a training workshop to elaborate more on SEEMS methods from GIZ (Germany), FAO, and DfID (UK). There are often technical workshops that would benefit from having the SEEMS team participate to showcase the common approach and gain buy-in from other technical researchers.

III. **Application of the SEEMS-Nutrition framework to ongoing projects**: Lastly, some have expressed interest in applying the SEEMS framework to ongoing nutrition-sensitive projects including USAID’s Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, and GIZ (Germany). These donors have mentioned that there are ongoing projects with nutrition-sensitive components that they’d like to better measure and have expressed interest in using or linking the SEEMS common approach to these programs.

4.5. Recommendations for Improving Uptake and Demand of Economic Evaluations
Several recommendations were made to overcome the challenges outlined above. As shown in Figure 10, our consultations revealed that there is room for more targeted engagement of stakeholders and platforms that can design and fund economic evaluation research, to directly address methodological concerns with measuring costs and benefits of nutrition-sensitive interventions, and to ensure tailored dissemination of outputs towards target audiences. Strategies that can be employed are listed below:

Figure 10: Potential ways to overcome challenges cited by stakeholders
The economic rationale for investing in nutrition-sensitive interventions has been sparse because of a lack of a consistent methodology that can address significant challenges in measuring costs, but especially the benefits of such interventions. SEEMS-Nutrition offers an exciting opportunity to potentially spur more investments and prioritization of nutrition-sensitive approaches based on a common methodology that can address the availability and quality of these data, as well as a consistent way of comparing these data across geographies.

When evidence is generated, it is important to consider how to promote uptake by stakeholders and what factors will make it most useful to decision-makers. Based on stakeholder interviews and desk research, we have identified key steps for researchers to promote the uptake, use, or influence of research evidence by decision-makers.

1. **Define what the goals are by understanding the decision maker’s priority areas to ensure that the evidence is relevant to them**
   a. What are the key questions they want to focus on?
   b. What are the intermediate and ultimate outcomes they seek?
   c. Decision-makers can help design research questions and approaches.

2. **Design the research in a way that responds to the decision-makers’ goals while also aligning with the local context.** This is an important step, as a common barrier to evidence translation is that researchers conducting studies for their reasons do not consider the potential use of their evidence in the ‘real world’ from the beginning (Njeuhmeli et al., 2019).
a. Engage with multisectoral stakeholders on the ground who understand the full context as much as possible (political, cultural, economic, and social facets of context).

3. Feedback results early, iterate and adapt along the way
   a. Rather than testing the final results after the research process, test it during the process for feedback, and be open to adapting the research along the way. This is similar to an innovation process called ‘sprints’ where smaller batches of work are being done for rapid testing and course correction, rather than planning for weeks and testing at the very end (Simpson, 2018).
   b. It is also a good idea to begin incorporating feedback from decision-makers early on, to help facilitate the process of evidence translation (Njeuhmeli et al., 2019). For example, validation workshops can be useful for sharing preliminary results (e.g. disaggregated resource use and costs per beneficiary) with policymakers and/or program staff at the country level.

4. Communicate results clearly and simply that is effective with the decision-makers
   a. Test what types of data visualization work best with decision-makers before developing dissemination materials – what makes the most sense to them?
   b. Along with a full report, provide summarized pieces such as an executive summary and/or infographics that summarize the key highlights.

Throughout these steps outlined above, there should be a constant establishment and maintenance of a mutually beneficial relationship. For example, while working with a policymaker, it is important to consider how election cycles, positive press, and public opinion will affect your engagement and the outcomes that the policymaker hopes for (Canales, Sheldon, Grieves, & Lehan, 2018b).

4.6. Next Steps for SEEMS-Nutrition
SEEMS-Nutrition has developed a comprehensive set of cost data collection tools for estimating financial and economic costs that can be used alongside planned and ongoing process, or impact evaluations. We have been engaging with the SEEMS Policy Advisory Group (PAG) to identify strategies and opportunities to disseminate these costing tools through different partners. SEEMS-Nutrition is also in the process of developing tools for the measurement of benefits, in consultation with the SEEMS Technical Advisory Group (TAG). We are aiming to finalize the benefits module, in 2021, and will combine them to create a methods document on the common approach and additional training modules.
Annex 1: Summary of Consultations
The following section provides more information on each of our stakeholder consultations by summarizing the key messages from each interview.

1. Donors and Development Banks

1.1. African Development Bank

Data challenges/gaps:

- There is a need to compare economic evaluations from different country contexts. However, the results from economic and financial analyses will typically vary by country due to differences in the delivery platforms used for each intervention. Existing economic evaluation reports are based on different sets of countries and can thus be difficult to aggregate and compare. As a result, high-level regional advocacy efforts can be difficult because major existing reports are quite global in scope.
- Additionally, the availability of evidence on cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit of nutrition-sensitive or multi-sectoral approaches are still very limited.

Data/information needs:

- Some different platforms and initiatives can be leveraged to communicate information on economic and financial analyses. It is important to package technical information in such a way that it is adapted to its target audience.

1.2. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Use case(s): Advocacy

- As the funder of the SEEMS project, BMGF of course supports the generation of economic evaluation evidence for nutrition. BMGF tends to prioritize catalytic investments that address market failures or interventions that other donors typically don’t invest in due to risk (i.e. areas where there’s not much supportive evidence yet), so much of their nutrition investments are in research and development.
- While BMGF does not necessarily use cost and benefit data in their investment decisions for nutrition, the foundation highly values the use of this data in their advocacy and policy work.

Data challenges/gaps

- A big challenge is how to account for multiple benefits – many nutrition-sensitive interventions have multiple benefits including nutrition, where nutrition might not even be the most important outcome to track. If you only look at stunting, for example, you may be undervaluing the benefits of other nutrition outcomes, as well as other health-related benefits from multi-sectoral interventions. We currently do not have a good way or model of assessing these multi-sectoral approaches in terms of measuring their benefits.
- Another challenge is the uncertainty and variability of economic evaluations since costs and methodology used can typically vary across country contexts.
Data/information needs

- It is important to make a compelling case on how everyone can use the SEEMS common approach, and show how it’s not just targeted towards a specific group.
- Many political decisions are not made based on cost-benefit data partly because economic evaluation evidence is not readily available and partly because such data is hard to access and interpret. As such, it’s also important to have clear messages and data visualizations that are tailored towards specific audiences to improve use and uptake.

1.3. Children’s Investment Fund Foundation

Use case(s): Strategic planning and program-level planning

- Economic evaluations are important for our strategy formation and selecting priority areas to work in such as child survival, nutrition, or reproductive health). These decisions are typically based on an executive review on what works in terms of gaps, overall cost, and potential impact (i.e. cost-effectiveness).
- Economic evidence is also used when evaluating new investments. The Board requires an assessment of cost-effectiveness for new investments and is very used to looking at these economic evaluation metrics (e.g. $/life saved or $/DALY averted). These metrics are typically calculated in-house by an analyst and vetted by their M&E team that would flag down any methodology or contextual issues related to the assumptions used.
- For example in Rwanda, CIFF funded a stunting program that engaged the agriculture sector with behavior change programming and homestead food production. For homestead food production, they started looking at the cost-effectiveness of several approaches using the available data that could be accessed.

Data/information needs:

- It’s important to have very clear reporting on the methods including any relevant assumptions made in the study, as well as a description of the relevant country contexts.

Challenges/gaps:

- There’s no standardized way of doing cost-effectiveness analysis since what you have in one study cannot always be applied to the next. There is a core set of cost-effectiveness studies for nutrition that is repeatedly cited or used, and some are not always replicable (even in the same country context).
- Additionally, there is too little data on costs and benefits for nutrition-sensitive approaches. As a result, many partners do not use economic analysis in their decisions because they are not readily available.
- Lastly, there is no standard approach when it comes to costing and measuring the benefits of health and nutrition interventions since these can vary across countries and programs.

1.4. UK Department for International Development

Use case(s): Strategic planning and program-level planning
Economic evaluations are quite important for decision-making at DFID. For new investments or programs, an initial concept note is typically sketched out describing the nature of the problem, the expected costs, and the potential benefits of nutrition interventions that will be implemented. Once approved, a full appraisal of the project will be conducted using a value-for-money (VFM) approach as much as possible. Overall, we are expected to provide concrete evidence of the benefits of the various program/project options we end up choosing.

DFID requires Value for Money (VFM) assessments before, during, and sometimes after its investments. These assessments use evidence of costs, cost-effectiveness, and cost-benefit to inform donor decisions and investments.

DFID has also developed a set of “development best buys”, which are a series of guidance notes summarizing the best evidence available for certain types of interventions/approaches.

Projects at DFID are also reviewed on an annual basis where we go back and assess the implanted programs using the value-for-money approach. Some of these dimensions have to do with the economic efficiency of the project in terms of cost benefits/effectiveness of programs and compare them to known benchmarks if available.

Data challenges/gaps

It can be quite hard to put costs alongside benefits since our nutrition investments can be quite multi-sectoral. Multi-sectoral interventions typically have multiple benefits, so can be difficult to look at just one outcome when assessing cost-effectiveness.

The nature of nutrition is complex. It’s not straightforward to measure how investing in agriculture for example can bring benefits to nutrition, which makes cost-effectiveness studies in this area quite challenging to do.

If cost-effectiveness/cost-benefit info is available, you also run the risk of prioritizing interventions/approaches where evidence is available. If there is no economic evidence data available, people can assume that those interventions/approaches are not cost-effective (which can be the case for nutrition-sensitive programs).

Lastly, nutrition-sensitive interventions are often context-specific and are often challenging to externally validate the methods used.

1.5. GiveWell

Use case(s): Program-level planning

GiveWell typically evaluates top charities by conducting economic evaluations though not necessarily focused on nutrition. They typically look for programs, interventions, or charities that meet 4 criteria:

1. Evidence of effectiveness
2. Cost-effectiveness
3. Room for more funding
4. Transparency

GiveWell’s research process typically comes from a wide variety of data sources. For example, the cost-effectiveness analyses typically require collating information from a wide variety of economic evaluation sources, where available, to develop a list of charity recommendations.
Data challenges/gaps

- When looking at economic evidence, sometimes there is uncertainty about the quality of the evidence since it is difficult to assess the external validity of the results.
- GiveWell’s work ideally should access the most rigorous economic evidence as possible, but this is not always the case since cost-effectiveness information/literature is typically not readily available.
- The variability in the quality of data is typically due to different methodologies when measuring costs and benefits in a variety of country contexts.

1.6. Norwegian Agency for Development

Use case(s): limited use case for economic evaluations

- At Norad, return on investment calculations or any such targets are not a part of the decision-making process.

Challenges/gaps:

- Norad is similar to other development agencies/donors in that it is always a struggle to determine the cost-effectiveness of investments due to the lack of available data, evidence, and project precedence. Some costs are easier to assess than others, for example, indirect costs (transaction, administrative, operational costs) are easier to assess than project-specific costs (implementation related expenses).
- Assessing the cost-effectiveness of a project can take time and be costly, and often requires comprehensive evaluations.

Data needs/gaps

- One thought to improve accessibility is increased donor collaboration. This includes more transparent information sharing and cost-sharing.

Funding

- Norad funds economic evaluations of multisectoral nutrition programs, however, we ask our partners to include this as a separate budget line in the project proposal.

1.7. Power of Nutrition

Use case(s): Strategic planning and program-level planning

- Economic evaluations are useful for strategy formation – the PoN was established to focus on a subset of 11 priority interventions based on their impact and cost-effectiveness.
- Additionally, such data informs our process of deciding which programs to invest in, which is largely driven by their implementing partners (World Bank, UNICEF, INGOs) who design programs in-line with government priorities.
- Economic evidence is also useful in assessing whether or not we should invest in other interventions outside of those 11 priority interventions. For example in Liberia, we cited a cost-effectiveness analysis to make a case for channeling money towards other interventions besides SAM interventions.
In terms of return on investment, we have used economic models that assessed what an intervention package will produce relative to the financial resources put in.

Challenges and gaps:

- It can be difficult to assess the impact of money going into health systems building activities, and not necessarily on specific interventions such as IFA supplementation.
- Additionally, it’s also difficult to attribute improvements in nutrition outcomes such as stunting to our specific programs, since PoN is part of a wider system of partners/implementers.
- PoN would love to use more of this economic evaluation evidence to influence their investments, but the reality is that they typically do not exist.

Data needs/gaps

- There is a need to make the data more frequently available or strive for a system that will turn out regular information on economic evidence.

1.8. UK Research and Innovation

Use Case(s): Program-level planning

- Economic evaluations are a component of every grant application that we review. We want to see that the applicant’s proposed solutions are effective. We evaluate whether the costs associated with the project is feasible, and also look at whether it would be effective. We do not impose a specific economic evaluation method since this can depend on their proposed activities.

Demand for economic evaluations

- There isn’t a call for more economic evaluations being conducted per se, but it is an important component of every application we have received.
- Since economic evaluations are part of our review, we typically need to be familiar with the different types of economic evaluation methods to make sense of the analysis that goes into these applications.

1.9. USAID Bureau for Resilience and Food Security

Use case(s): limited use case for economic evaluations

- The Bureau for Resilience and Food Security has not done much in terms of measuring the impact of their food safety programs and has also not done any assessments on the cost.

Data needs/gaps

- However, USAID wants to build up the evidence base to inform ongoing investments and provide government partners with evidence-based recommendations on funding priorities towards their journey of self-reliance (i.e. inform actions to ensure the sustainability of programs).
- We have new nutrition-sensitive projects in our Food Safety Innovations lab that are very new that they would like to better measure (e.g. work with GAIN and partners on mass media marketing for consumer behavior change, or training food vendors on food safety). This may be
a good opportunity to incorporate the SEEMS framework to start looking at costs relative to the outcomes achieved.

2. UN Agencies and Networks

2.1. Food and Agriculture Organization

Data needs/gaps

- One of our goals is to identify 3-5 prioritized activities that can be included in FAO’s agriculture programs to make them more nutrition sensitive. To support this process, we want to build the evidence base within FAO to figure out what those prioritized activities are.
- More specifically, the FAO’s Food and Nutrition Division is working towards mainstreaming nutrition into agricultural policies and programs by providing guidance and training tools for decision-makers. Towards this end, the SEEMS frameworks/tools will be useful in bolstering the evidence base for multisectoral approaches.

2.2. SUN Donor Network

Use case(s): limited use case for economic evaluations

- Donors can have different use cases when it comes to economic evaluations. Some donors have more of a focus on cost-effectiveness when making investment decisions, while others are less so and focus more on the implementation of food security programs (or other nutrition-sensitive programming).
- Donors seem to vary in their prioritization of cost-effectiveness or return on investment, which may be due to differences in organizational culture/history. Among those that use economic evidence, donors do not necessarily base their program decisions based solely on economic evaluations since there is no one silver bullet.

Recommended tools/approaches

- The Advanced Data Planning Tool (ADAPT), developed by PARIS21 (hosted by the OECD in Paris). Helps data producers in the national statistical system to consult, cost, and chart their indicators as defined by the national development. ADAPT supports monitoring of data plans, which could be either strategic such as National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) or operational such as statistical ‘programs of work’ of governmental organizations supporting the implementation of the sectoral policy. ADAPT also allows for detailed costing and budgeting of data planning activities.

2.3. SUN Movement Secretariat

Use case(s): Strategic planning and advocacy

- The use of an economic argument is used widely in the SUN movement – this is typically used when high-level officials visit countries or attend forums to illustrate the rationale for investments in nutrition.
SUN countries have used economic evaluation data to better present the nutrition case, but this is not always consistent across the board. Government involvement (not just the sectoral ministries, but also the Ministry of Finance/Economic Development) during the design and dissemination phase of the research is very important for the data to be used for building political commitments for nutrition.

**Recommended tools/approaches**

- **Common Results Framework (CRF) Planning Tool** – The CRF tool allows countries to view through the details (outlining activities and costs) of twenty SUN country plans analyzed between 2013 and 2014 with the view of informing their national nutrition plan. The SMS uses the CRF planning tool to provide technical guidance and overall support to countries that want to do the costing of their nutrition plan. The CRF planning tool encourages countries to be more conscious about the associated costs of their planned activities.

- **Cost of Hunger (CoH) study** – The Cost of Hunger (COHA) study led by WFP was done in many countries where they looked at the costs as well as the ROI, with the view of involving ministries of finance during the dissemination phase to get stronger commitments.

**Challenges/gaps:**

- Very few economic evaluation studies are led by the government or have sufficient government involvement, which can lead to limited uptake of the data during dissemination.

- Raising domestic resources to fund costing activities is difficult for countries. Costing nutrition plans is a hard exercise for SUN countries since most of them don’t have the resources to do this and it is considered as non-essential.

### 3. Implementing Partners and Technical Assistance Providers

#### 3.1. USAID Advancing Nutrition

**Challenges/gaps**

- There are often challenges in trying to collaborate with people of different backgrounds/fields when working on a multi-sectoral project. There can be common terminology in their fields, but some can mean different things in other disciplines.

- Additionally, it is also challenging to use economic evidence derived from different country contexts or geographies.

**Recommended tools/approaches**

- The Food Assistance Cost-Effectiveness Tool ([FACET approach](#)) aimed at supporting decisions around the programming of specialized nutritious foods.

- [Food for Peace Modality Decision Tool](#) that looks at how implementing partners make their food assistance decisions and the drivers behind those decisions.

#### 3.2. German Agency for International Cooperation

**Challenges/gaps**
The programs that we implement under the Knowledge for Nutrition (K4N) project are so different that it’s difficult to agree on a common framework for economic evaluations for nutrition-sensitive activities.

There is also an issue of double-counting when it comes to evaluations for multi-sectoral programs such as health, WaSH, etc.

While evidence for good programming and outcomes exist for nutrition-specific interventions, this is less the case for nutrition-sensitive.

The Ministry typically wants to know what our successes have been, where we can improve, and where we can make our programs more nutrition-sensitive in the future. However, the economic evidence/data is not always there for us to show this.

Lastly, there are capacity issues when it comes to conducting evaluations since implementing programs are already quite stretched with existing demands.

Funding

All programs have internal resources for funding evaluations. For example, there is a big program under the global program for food security and resilience, which has a huge body of data now. They are currently running a third round of surveys and have a baseline in 10 out of 12 countries under the K4N project.

3.3. Nutrition International

Use case(s): Program-level planning

Through Canada’s partnership with Nutrition International (NI), NI has worked on a cost-effectiveness analysis tool for multiple micronutrient supplementation (MMS).

NI has been working to improve the evidence base/cost-effectiveness analysis for the adoption of multiple MMS for pregnant women.

Gaps and challenges:

Collected/published evidence on effect sizes of nutrition-sensitive interventions, and reliable estimates for unit costs of nutrition-sensitive interventions are outside of the countries they need, so cost-effectiveness can be uncertain.

It’s rare to have quality cost-effectiveness analyses or cost-benefit analysis in all countries under review, as well as specific regions. There is also significant variation among regions at the subnational level.

Some economic modeling tools can help with interpreting evidence, but are often too data-intensive, or not user-friendly for use. Additionally, the resulting findings can be hard to apply/interpret in other country contexts.

3.4. Palladium Group / MEASURE Evaluation

Recommended reading:

We spoke with Palladium about their recent guide on the Fundamentals of Economic Evaluation in Public Health and also invited them to join the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)
4. Advocacy and Policy

4.1. Global Nutrition Report (Development Initiatives)

Use case(s): Strategic planning and advocacy

- One of GNR’s main purpose is to fulfill a purpose for being an accountability framework around the N4Gs commitments by tracking donor financing for nutrition. We typically look at donor aid, but GNR is also now looking at areas outside of DAC, such as the private sector, NGOs, country governments, or innovative financing mechanisms.

Challenges/gaps

- As we start thinking about how to achieve the WHA nutrition targets, we still do not have a figure for the funding amount from donors or governments that we need to do this. We currently don’t have this bottom-line number when we talk to donors or countries.
- There is also not enough data on which nutrition-sensitive actions should be prioritized or are more cost-effective because there is no agreed-upon framework. As such, it’s difficult for countries to plan for nutrition-sensitive actions in comparison to nutrition-specific.

Areas of opportunity to collaborate

- GNR is also now reporting on other reports (called themed reports) that provides key recommendations/examples of projects that are working within nutrition. It may be interesting to highlight projects like SEEMS to encourage future work in this area by showcasing the SEEMS common approach or some of the country case studies.

4.2. International Coalition for Advocacy on Nutrition (ICAN)

Use Case(s): Advocacy

- The cornerstone of their nutrition advocacy is the World Bank Investment Framework for Nutrition (IFN) – we use this to push forward the nutrition-specific, WHA-related interventions that we continue to push for. Specifically, they use it to highlight the gap in the progress in achieving the WHA targets. This remains the top priority at 1000 Days in addition to the ICAN coalition overall, and they mainly point towards the IFN because it’s the only financing framework that we have at this point.
- There’s also the Copenhagen Consensus that they use in their top-line messaging – part of what they struggle with is that the Investment Framework doesn’t capture nutrition-sensitive financing benchmarks or gaps as it does for nutrition-specific. The Investment Framework itself even has its limitations of estimating nutrition-specific benchmarks because of the interventions included in its methods.
- However, the main value-add for us is being able to say that: the world needs X amount of dollars over X years to achieve these nutrition goals is incredibly useful. Advocacy messages tend to resonate more with policymakers if you can say that investments in X area will lead to X amount of lives saved or X amount of people with access to services.

Advocacy

- ICAN partners generally advocate for more investments in the generation of new evidence or data. Overall, however, I wouldn’t say that our advocacy efforts around more data aren’t
necessarily a big push – it’s more included as one of the last bullet points we have in our advocacy asks.

- Within the US market, 1000 Days has advocated for better tracking of the costs and expenditures of nutrition programs, and also assess the returns that we’re getting back. Particularly on wasting, they’ve been pushing for more availability and accessibility of data that can tell us the return that we get for investing in treatment and prevention of wasting. For example, the US agencies may have some of this data, but not necessarily make it available to use.

Demand for new evidence on nutrition-sensitive

- If we equip advocates with the messaging backed by the evidence, it can only make it easier to bring the non-nutrition folks (either other non-nutrition advocates or policymakers) along the way.
- In terms of scaling up interventions at the national level, governments are also becoming more interested in cost-effectiveness data to inform these types of decisions.

Key audiences

- Advocates – this group can help push out this new evidence
- Technical experts – she is always interested in bridging the technical experts with the advocacy community. If we have consensus on the methodology, it’s very useful to bridge these two communities to make sure that people are using the new data.
- Country governments – useful for country-level decision-makers when trying to see which interventions to scale up.
- Country-level CSOs – Local and national partners such as Uganda and Zambia have been increasingly aware of how this analysis can be helpful.

Key events or moments to present the SEEMS data

- The Nutrition for Growth (N4G) summit when it happens
- SUN Global Gathering (SUN GG)
- Regional events in SSA and Asia especially on the civil society end – the regional events tend to have a lot of engagement with partners on-the-ground trying to also push on their country governments.

Funders to generate this new evidence

- BMGF – they’re typically investing in R&D related projects by investing in areas without previous evidence
- CIFF – has also done some work in this area in the past
- DFID Zambia – they are currently funding SNV from the Netherlands to do some costing work, but at quite a small scale

Challenges/barriers to using new EE evidence

- Having a clear methodology – to the point where it can be easily replicated or applied to other programs.
- Outlining the rationale for investing in new data – Further advocacy may be needed to explain the benefits of doing this type of analysis.
- Limited funding in general – Hard to get funding for data/research/analysis overall
• Being able to have a benchmark $X$ amount as an ask that is tailored to specific to donor markets may be more helpful.
• When we push for multi-sectoral nutrition programs, we typically see a barrier from policymakers when they start asking for the evidence behind them.

Annex 2: Number of consultations by organization type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Number of Consultations</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TA providers or I/NGOs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government/public sector</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>University/research institutes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral/multilateral donors</td>
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<td>UN institutions/bodies</td>
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<td>Private donors</td>
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Annex 3: List of organizations consulted

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<td>Avenir Health</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Development Initiatives</td>
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<td>GiveWell</td>
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<td>Nutrition International</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Palladium</td>
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<td>Results for Development</td>
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<td>Boston University, School of Public Health</td>
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<td>Columbia University, Earth Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN Institutions/Bodies</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization</td>
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<td>SUN Donor Network</td>
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<td>SUN Movement Secretariat</td>
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<td>Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation</td>
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<td>Foundation</td>
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<td>Children’s Investment Fund Foundation</td>
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<td>Power of Nutrition</td>
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