



NUTRITION QUICK TIPS SERIES



NUTRITION-SENSITIVE VALUE CHAINS

This note complements Quick Tips: Nutrition-sensitive food production and Quick Tips: Creating and maintaining consumer demand for healthy diets. This Quick Tips focuses on the food supply chain post farm gate. Collectively, the three Quick Tips unpack the food system (Figure 1) and provide practical tips to support the programming and design of EU support for agri-food systems that can contribute to healthy diets, food security and nutrition.

A nutrition-sensitive value chain (NSVC) (Figure 2) is a food value chain that has been shaped to alleviate constraints in the supply or demand of food, as they relate to dietary and nutrition problems. Given that food is not only produced, but also stored, processed, distributed and marketed, the NSVC approach has the potential to unpack the complexity of food systems and provide clear nutrition entry points and pathways¹.

Note: The NSVC includes food production systems and input supply, and these steps of the food supply chain are covered in Quick Tips: Nutrition-sensitive food production. The entire supply chain affects the food environment.

Food environments comprise foods available and accessible to people in their surroundings and the nutritional quality, safety, price, convenience, labelling and promotion of these foods. These environments should ensure that people have equal and equitable access to sufficient, affordable, safe and nutritious foods that meet dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, considering the various physical, social, economic, cultural and political factors that influence that access².

¹ [Nutrition-sensitive value chains – A guide for project design Volume 1](#). Bioversity International, IFAD, 2018.

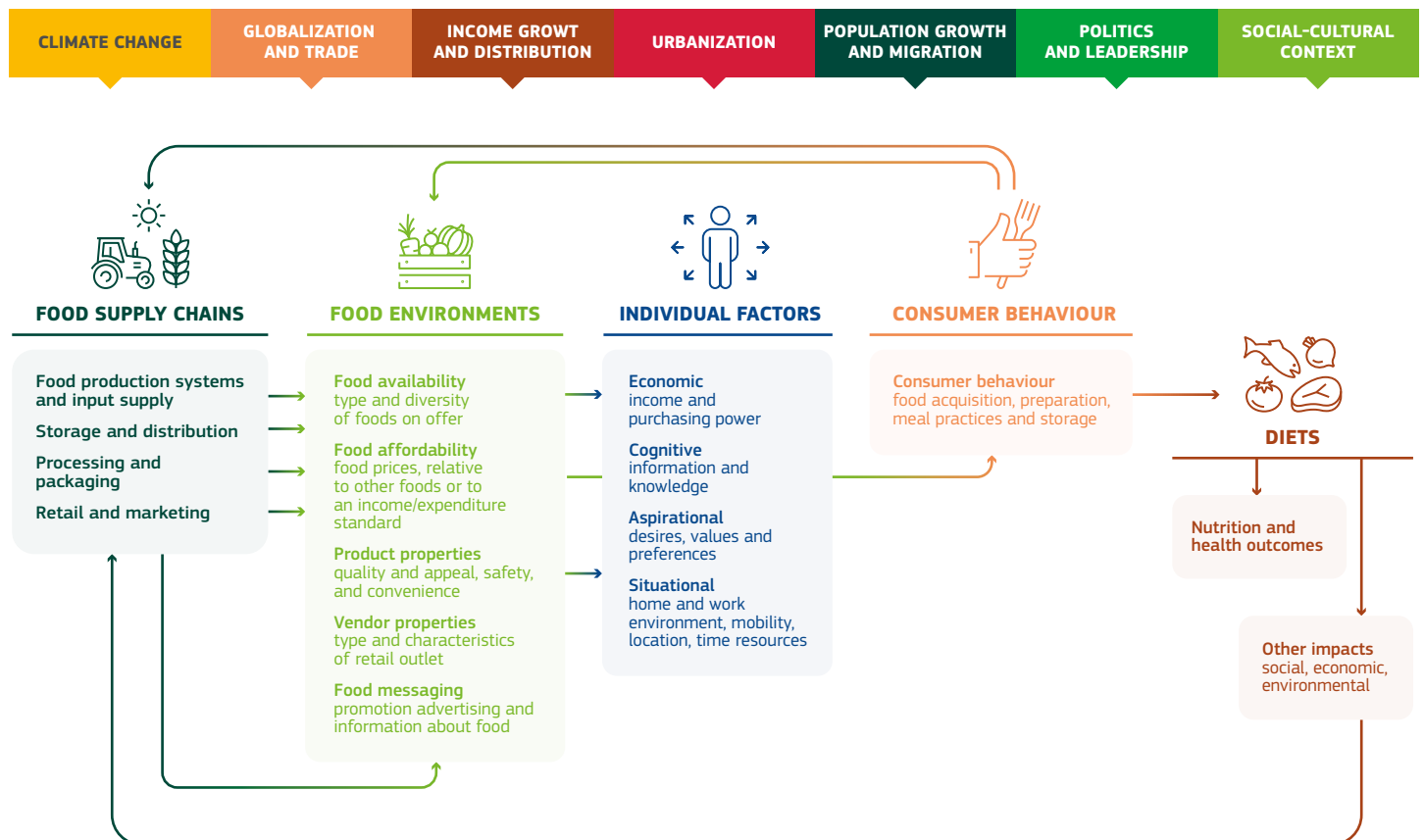
² CFS, 2021. [CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition](#).

Investing in agriculture and food systems has been globally recognised for playing a key role in improving food security, dietary quality and nutrition^{3,4}. However, current food systems do not enable value chain players to produce and supply affordable healthy food to consumers; hence, the vast majority of people today cannot access or afford a healthy diet⁵. Applying a nutrition lens to food value chains involves a whole-of-diet perspective. Supporting multiple value chains can help to

create a more robust, nutritious food system by ensuring that a range of diverse, safe, nutritious foods are accessible and affordable year-round. The NSVC approach involves broadening the concept of value from a purely economic focus to one that incorporates nutritional value. It leverages opportunities to enhance supply and/or demand of nutritious foods and it places consumers' nutritional needs at the forefront.

Figure 1: Food Systems Framework⁶

EXTERNAL DRIVERS



3 Ruel, M.T. et al. (2018). [Nutrition-sensitive agriculture: What have we learned so far?](#) Global Food Security 17:128–153.

4 Refer to Quick Tips: Nutrition-sensitive food production.

5 Refer to Quick Tips: Creating and maintaining consumer demand for healthy diets for more information on the consumer behaviour and diet aspects of the food system.

6 Based on Fanzo, J., et al. [The Food Systems Dashboard](#) is a new tool to inform better food policy. Nature Food 1:243–246. 2020.

Strategies



Supporting supply of nutritious food

Supporting the year-round supply of safe, affordable nutritious foods that contribute to sustainable, healthier diets and food security through innovations and technologies:

- **Support transportation technologies**, for example those that preserve nutrient content or maintain the cold chain as many nutritious foods are highly perishable. Suitable storage and transportation are important to prevent the contamination and/or spread of microbiological organisms.
- **Support accessible processing interventions and technologies.** Technologies, packaging and processing techniques can reduce nutrient losses, prevent contamination and extend shelf-life.
- **Develop distribution systems.** For example, establish partnerships with consolidated businesses to leverage their wide-reaching distribution systems; consider business models to reach low-income consumers.

- **Improve smallholder access to markets by strengthening vertical linkages**, for example by promoting contract agreements between farmers and retailers or processors, **or horizontal linkages**, by creating producer organisations to assimilate produce and reduce transaction costs, or **providing of market and price information.**
- **Consider innovations** such as small-size packaging to improve affordability or a food safety toolkit for informal markets.



Strengthening capacity

Strengthening the knowledge and capacity of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), processors and traders (especially women and youth):

- **Provide technical assistance and capacity building to women-led agri-food SMEs.** Combining technical and business training with improved access to finance will not only increase the supply of safe and nutritious food but also contribute to gender equity and positive nutrition outcomes for women⁷.
- **Develop the capacity of food producers, SMEs and retailers for storage, processing and packaging of nutrient-dense foods for value addition, to reduce spoilage and contamination of nutritious foods.**

- **Support strategies aimed at strengthening education and capacity-building programmes for youth**, enabling their autonomy, decision-making and empowerment, and increasing their access to decent work opportunities.
- **Improve access to credit** for smallholders/agri-SMEs/ financial intermediaries (microfinance institutions, commercial banks, etc.) through sustainable investments in agriculture.

⁷ Refer to Quick Tips: Nutrition, gender equality and women's empowerment.

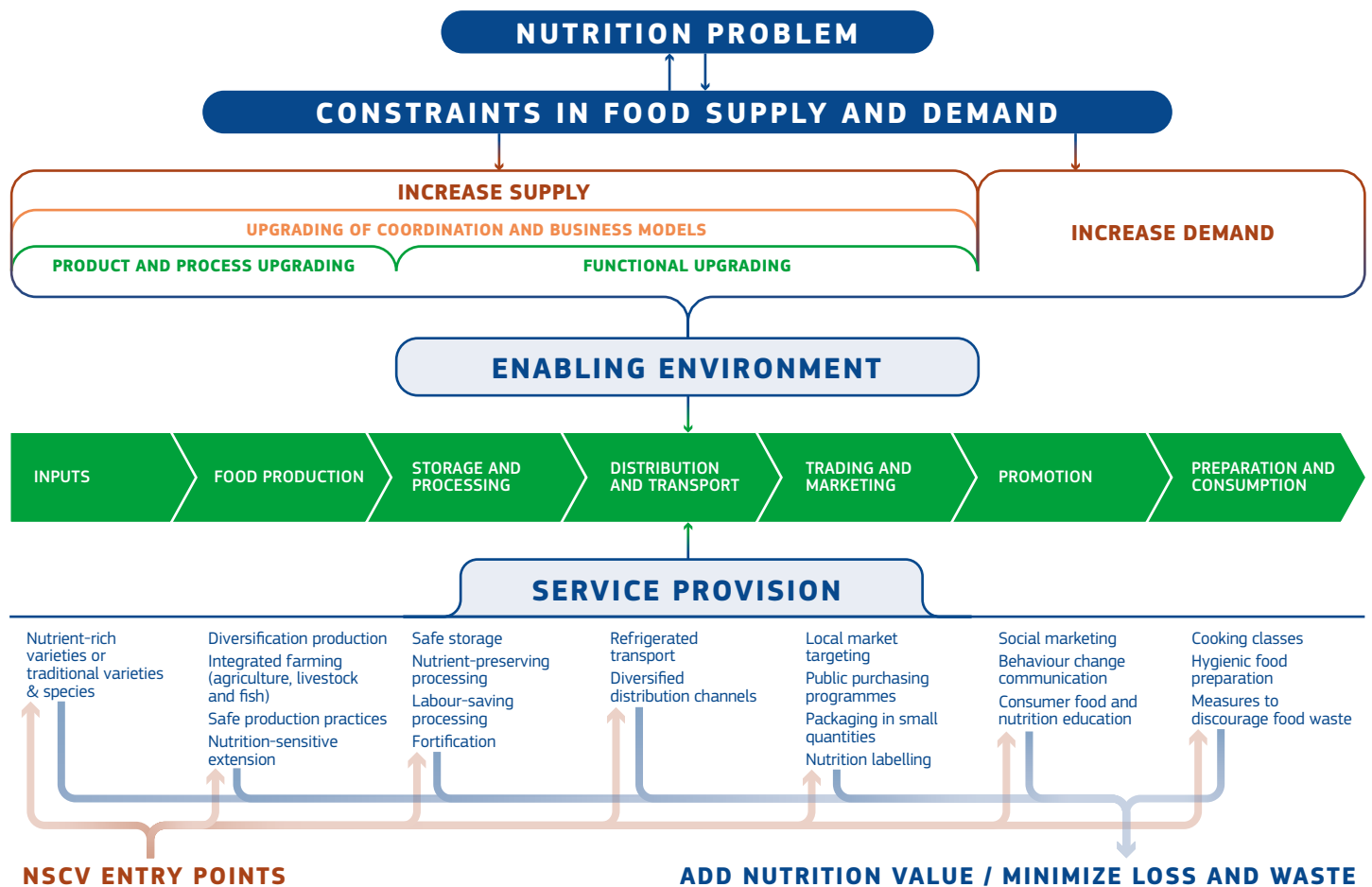


Frame agricultural policies in broader strategy

Agricultural including value chain-related policies need to be framed within a broader strategy and coherent vision of food systems that address inequities, enhance diets and lead to better food security and nutrition outcomes.

- **Adapt value chain analytical approaches** to understand how food products are used and what motivates consumer choice and market demand, including from local or traditional markets.
- Support **market information systems** that provide timely, accessible, transparent information about food-related market transactions, including enhanced tracking of current and future supply stocks and price data, including for local and territorial markets, where possible and appropriate.
- **Control incorporation of potentially unhealthy ingredients during processing, such as salt, sugar or trans-fats.**
- Establish regulations to protect children and adolescents from the **marketing of high fat, salt and sugar foods.**
- Integrate **food safety with agriculture and nutrition policymaking** and strengthen food safety information systems and regulatory frameworks.
- Develop and support **inclusive food safety or quality standards** especially for informal markets (e.g. voluntary training and certification schemes).
- Increase **access to nutritious food for public institution** (e.g. adopt public food procurement policy that applies nutritional guidelines to food procured for public institutions).
- Implement and enforce the **International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (BMS)**. The code and subsequent resolutions were established to regulate the marketing of BMS and ensure the protection and promotion of optimal infant and young child feeding.
- Support a **conducive business environment.**

Figure 2: [The NSVC Framework – Strategies and entry points](#)⁸



8 Adapted from IFAD [Nutrition-sensitive value chains: A framework for project design](#). 2018



Further information and support

- [Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition](#). CFS, February 2021.
- [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system. European Commission, May 2020.
- Hawkes, C., Walton, S., Haddad, L., Fanzo, J. 2020. [42 policies and actions to orient food systems towards healthier diets for all](#). London: Centre for Food Policy, City, University of London.
- [Nutrition-sensitive value chains – A guide for project design](#). Bioversity International, IFAD 2018.
- [Guidance Note on Food Fortification in development cooperation](#). INTPA F3, 2020.
- [EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices](#). EU DG SANTE, 2021.
- Where relevant, the Food and Nutrition Security domain of the [Value Chain Analysis for Development](#) (VCA4D) tool could be applied.

Case studies of EU-funded projects:

- [Agri-connect: supporting value chains for shared prosperity](#), Republic of Tanzania
- [Resilient Fisheries and Livestock Value Chain for inclusive and sustainable growth](#) in Somalia
- Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU).

Projects without a link can be studied further in the annex to the [6th Progress Report on the Action Plan on Nutrition](#).

The new OECD-DAC policy marker on nutrition was approved by the OECD-DAC for official development assistance reporting in 2019 with the support of the Commission and Member States. According to this marker, 'a project should be identified as nutrition related when it is intended to address the immediate or underlying determinants of malnutrition.' An [OECD-DAC Nutrition Policy Marker Handbook](#) is available.

The EU is a global leader in promoting gender equality as a key political objective of its external action and common foreign policy, aimed at accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. By 2025, 85% of new EU actions should

contribute to achieving the objective of gender equality and women's empowerment, with more actions including it as a main objective. Women play a critical role in agriculture and food systems and it is crucial to create conditions to promote their joint participation and engagement in shaping sustainable agri-food systems to improve diets and nutrition. Please refer to **Quick Tips: Nutrition, gender equality and women's empowerment**.

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