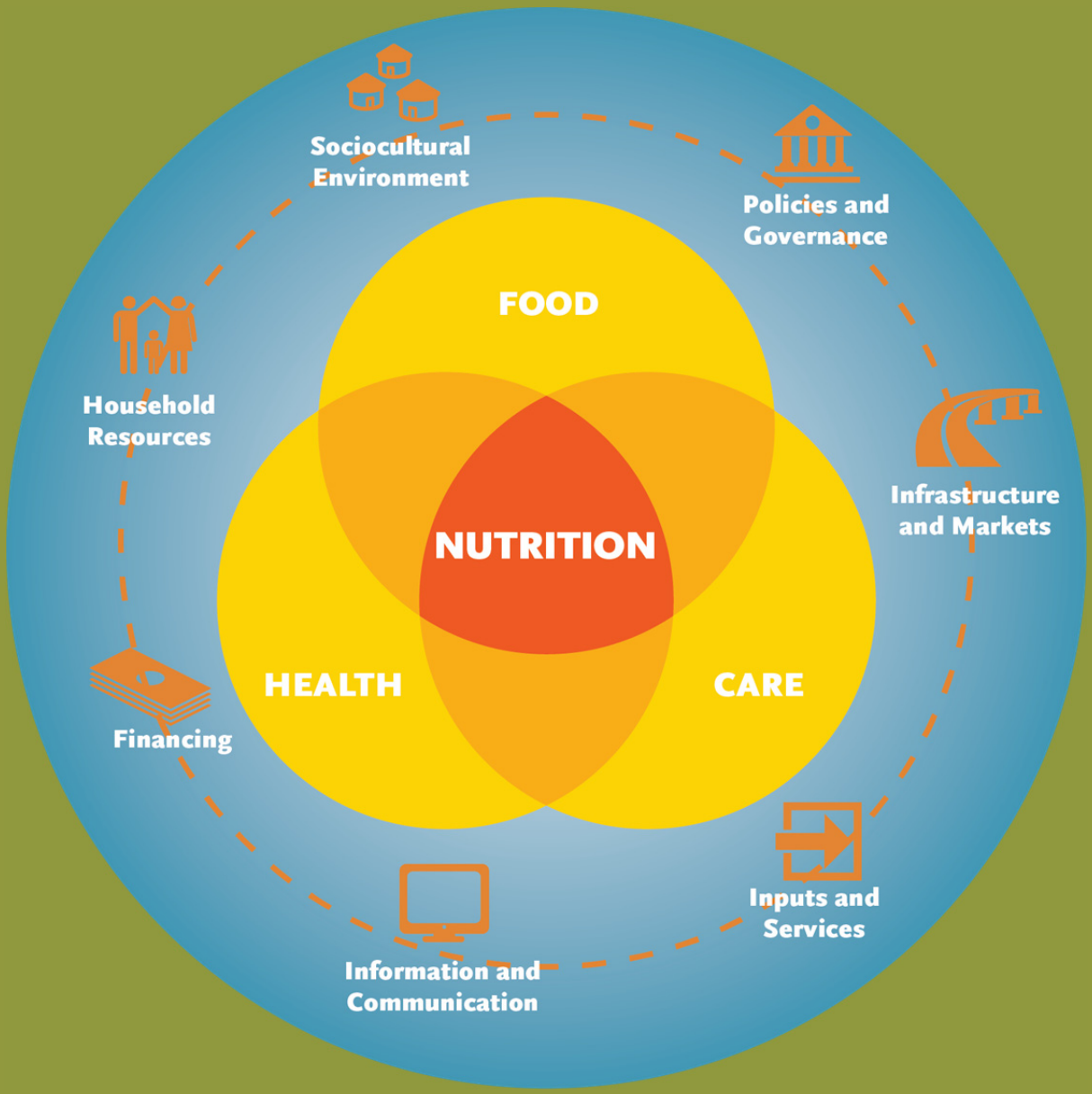
USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SPRING
Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally

Assessing the Application of Systems Thinking for Nutrition



May 2018

Assessing the Application of Systems Thinking for Nutrition

ABOUT SPRING

The Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) project is a seven-year USAID-funded cooperative agreement to strengthen global and country efforts to scale up high-impact nutrition practices and policies and improve maternal and child nutrition outcomes. The project is managed by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc., with partners Helen Keller International, The Manoff Group, Save the Children, and the International Food Policy Research Institute.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

SPRING. 2018. *Assessing the Application of Systems Thinking for Nutrition*. Arlington, VA: Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) project.

DISCLAIMER

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement AID-OAA-A-11-00031, SPRING), managed by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI). The contents are the responsibility of JSI, and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the U.S. Government.

SPRING

JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.
1616 Fort Myer Drive, 16th Floor
Arlington, VA 22209 USA
Phone: 703-528-7474
Fax: 703-528-7480
Email: info@spring-nutrition.org
Internet: www.spring-nutrition.org

COVER PHOTOS: The SPRING Framework for Applying Systems Thinking to Nutrition

Contents

The Case for Systems Thinking 1
A Systems Thinking Approach 1
How to Conduct a Systems Assessment 4
How to Use the Findings 5
The Systems Thinking Assessment Tool 6
References 31

Figures

Figure 1. The SPRING Framework for Applying Systems Thinking to Nutrition 1
Figure 2. Illustrative Radar Graph of Factor Scores from the Systems Thinking Assessment Tool 29
Figure 3. Illustrative Presentation of Summary Findings as an Overlay on the Systems Framework 29

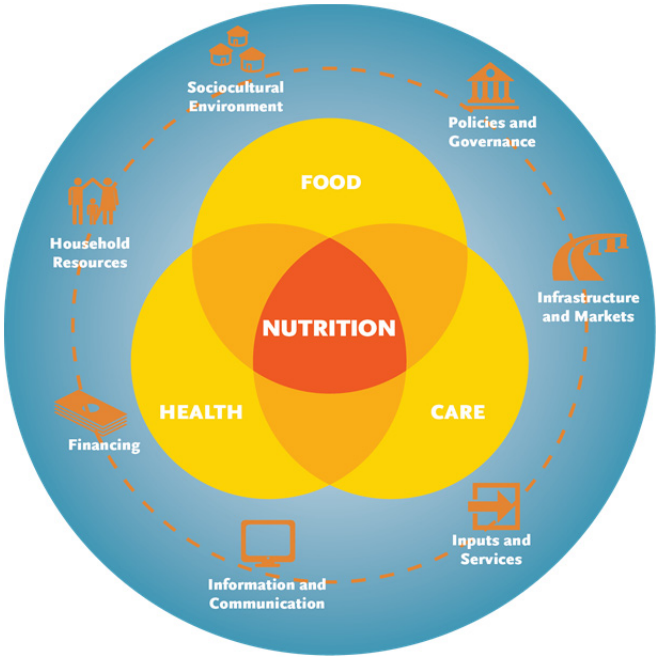
Tables

Table 1. Template for a Tabular Presentation of Findings 30

The Case for Systems Thinking

Today, the world faces a double burden of malnutrition, with almost three billion people suffering from either undernutrition or overweight (FAO 2013). No country is untouched by this crisis. Hunger and inadequate nutrition contribute to high rates of maternal, infant, and child anemia, morbidity, and mortality; impaired cognitive function and reduced future productivity; and the development of obesity and nutrition-related chronic conditions such as diabetes. The causes of this crisis are numerous.

Figure 1. The SPRING Framework for Applying Systems Thinking to Nutrition



In 2014, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) released its *Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy (2014–2025)*, which recognizes the "multi-factorial causation" of malnutrition (USAID 2014a), and *Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development* (USAID 2014b), which suggests that systems thinking could benefit multi-sectoral approaches by strengthening program[1] design, implementation, and measurement; increasing impact; and fostering sustainability. Enthusiasm for systems thinking is growing, but scant guidance exists on how to apply a systems thinking approach.

The Systems Thinking Assessment Tool

In 2015, USAID's multi-sectoral nutrition project, Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING), developed a framework for applying systems thinking to improve nutrition (see figure 1 and panel 1) (SPRING 2015). The framework includes seven cross-cutting factors: (1) policies and governance, (2) infrastructure and markets, (3) inputs and services, (4) information and communication, (5) financing, (6) household resources, and (7) sociocultural environment. Each can influence, interact with, and impact the others; and each can hinder—or foster—improvements in nutritional outcomes.

Systems thinking or a *systems approach* calls on program planners and policy-makers to look at the forest AND the trees.

With this framework and the accompanying thought paper (2015), SPRING made the case for policymakers, program planners, and program managers to consider these factors and how they positively and negatively contribute to desired outcomes; recognize interrelationships between them; anticipate the potential for negative consequences; and take advantage of synergies among existing systems, programs, and structures. It is important to emphasize that we do *not* expect that everyone will do everything at the same time.

[1] The term *program* is used here, but this tool is appropriate for multi-sectoral and sector-specific programs as well as projects funded by government agencies and nongovernmental organization alike.

Panel 1: The SPRING Framework for Applying Systems Thinking to Nutrition-Related Actions

In 2015, SPRING developed a simple framework for applying systems thinking to nutrition-related actions (figure 1), built off the work in USAID's paper on local systems (2014b), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) framework of the causes of undernutrition (UNICEF 1990, 2013), and the World Health Organization's building blocks for health systems (WHO 2010). This framework illustrates the interrelationships among the seven cross-cutting factors described below.

1. POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE

Policies affect food, care, health, and the environment—although their level of impact varies according to adherence and enforcement. For example, maternity-leave policies and legislation can have an impact on breastfeeding practices in countries where the majority of women have formal employment. SPRING's *Pathways to Better Nutrition* (PBN) case studies demonstrate that clear, long-term, multistakeholder policies are critical to increasing commitments for improved nutrition (Pomeroy-Stevens et al. 2016a, 2016b).

Good governance, according to the former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, "is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development" (United Nations 1998). The World Health Organization's nutrition governance score, used to assess a country's readiness to accelerate actions for improving nutrition, includes 10 elements essential for the successful development and implementation of national nutrition policies and strategies.[2] Collaboration and coordination, in particular, has been widely emphasized because it affects the implementation of multi-sectoral nutrition plans at all levels and across departmental and sectoral boundaries (Levinson, Balarajan, and Marini 2013). SPRING's PBN case studies also reveal that the prioritization of nutrition, another element of good governance, determines the amount of funding, time, and effort it will receive (Pomeroy-Stevens et al. 2016a, 2016b).

2. INFRASTRUCTURE AND MARKETS

Infrastructure, including roads and physical structures like health facilities, are critical to good nutrition: to educate and provide health and nutrition services and to store, distribute, and sell agricultural, food, sanitation, and hygiene products. The *market* is also essential in terms of the delivery, sale, purchase, and ultimately consumption of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and health products. Markets can enhance, enable, or prevent improvements in nutritional status. For example, building a road to a market or trading post may allow a community to engage in value chains that impact incomes and access to healthy, diverse foods. And improving a market's sanitation facilities can reduce the spread of food and waterborne pathogens.

3. INPUTS AND SERVICES

A systems approach takes into consideration the nutrition-related *inputs*, products, and supplies necessary for food production, storage, preparation, and distribution of nutrition services, ranging from seeds, fertilizers, silos, and food-processing equipment to preventive and curative medicines, medical devices, and technology. However, these inputs are of little use absent the human resources and *services* to provide, promote, and distribute them. This includes teachers, health care providers, extension and advisory workers, and even salespeople and distributors. Despite the global consensus on essential actions for addressing malnutrition, the workforce

[2] For more information on this indicator, see http://apps.who.int/nutrition/landscape/help.aspx?helpid=384.

promoting them is often insufficient in number, underqualified, and unsupported. A systems approach calls for the better integration of nutrition into a wide range of broadly defined services.

4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Information regarding the availability of food; the cost of agricultural inputs; the nutritional status of vulnerable people; the implementation of actions by enterprise owners, health service providers, farmers, households, and individuals; and the existence of policies and protocols is of little use without effective *communication*. Information communicated through government decrees, mass media, community mobilization efforts, and interpersonal interactions affects food security, care practices, and the health environment. For example, national-level changes to policies, financing, information, and monitoring systems are ineffective unless effectively conveyed at the community and household levels. Similarly, a failure to impart information about the cost of agricultural inputs can influence the types of food grown, stored, and purchased.

5. FINANCING

Adequate and effective *financing* is crucial to the development and implementation of nutrition policies as well as the strengthening of governance, infrastructure, markets, inputs, services, information, and communication. A lack of financing is among the most significant barriers to reducing undernutrition. The USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy states: "political will for nutrition must be reflected through financial support" (USAID 2014a). Similarly, the *2016 Global Nutrition Report* asserts: "commitment without funding represents unfulfilled good intentions" (IFPRI 2016). Because of the multi-sectoral nature of nutrition, activities related to it are often embedded in other sectors or funded through larger, integrated budget lines. This presents challenges to nutrition-related budgeting, allocations, and spending and makes it difficult to advocate or track funding for nutrition. Only a broad systems approach allows for the effective allocation and use of financing to holistically improve nutritional outcomes.

6. HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES

Household resources include human resources—knowledge, skills, agency, and self-confidence—and financial resources and assets, including technology. Access to and equitable intra-household distribution of resources drive their use and how people access services. Household resources also affect the understanding and adoption of optimal care practices as well as nutritional status. For example, access to an education and an income enables a woman to make well-informed decisions regarding her own health and nutrition as well as that of her children. Systems thinking links varied efforts to improve household resources and maximizes the use of resources for education, food, health, WASH, and other nutritional needs.

7. SOCIOCULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The *sociocultural environment*, including gender roles, relationships, cultural values, customs, and norms, influence the perceptions of and access to resources and services, as well as nutrition-related behaviors and decisions around production, purchasing, preparing, consuming, storing, and disposing. It also mediates interactions with the other six factors. For example, the belief that sugar water should be given to children at birth to whet their appetites, or that exclusively breastfed children need water when the weather is hot, hinders the adoption of evidence-based breastfeeding practices.

A systems approach does, however, mean that programmers and policymakers are intentional about what they will and will not do – and when they might seek partnerships with others in order to fill gaps. Nonetheless, questions remained as to whether such an approach was feasible or realistic for programming at the national and sub-national level.

To determine how well the SPRING systems framework maps to "real world" nutrition programs, we conducted a series of interviews with SPRING home office staff and field office staff, as well as country counterparts and program beneficiaries in Ghana and the Kyrgyz Republic, using a semi-structured interview guide (SPRING 2018a and b). Our findings indicated that the framework maps well to our programs in these two countries, and that it could shed light on the overlap between systems thinking, multi-sectoral approaches, theories of behavior change, and principles of good program design. We concluded that it would be useful in the future for assessing, designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating inter- and multi-sectoral nutrition programs.

Based on these findings, it was clear that there would be value in an assessment tool that is more widely useful and broadly applicable for other programs. Using the original assessment questionnaire as a starting point, we updated the tool for use at various stages of program design and implementation. After several rounds of review by SPRING's multi-sectoral nutrition program experts working at headquarters and in field offices, we finalized this Systems Thinking Assessment Tool to help a wide range of actors, including government representatives, funding partners, and implementing agencies to—

- deepen understanding of the broader landscape of nutrition, including multiple stand-alone initiatives
- encourage collective ownership of efforts to improve nutrition
- raise awareness across sectors and levels of the many factors that affect nutritional outcomes
- strengthen design and planning processes by identifying the factors—across sectors—that should be prioritized and the interactions and the consequences that should be considered
- monitor the unintended the consequences of program-related actions and determine if additional steps are necessary to coordinate, collaborate, or address one or more factors in the framework
- provide a holistic view of a program's achievements by identifying what contributed to and what hindered results.

How to Conduct a Systems Assessment

An assessment team, composed of government, funding, and implementing agency representatives, as well as beneficiaries, should agree on the leadership, methods, and timing of the assessment. The assessment will need to be led by one or two individuals—staff members or consultants of the government, funding, or implementing agency. The assessment can be conducted prior to program design, during strategic planning or work planning, and/or periodically thereafter, using one or both of the following methods:

- group discussions that bring together stakeholders from multiple levels (national, regional, district, and community) or separate discussions at each level
- key informant interviews at multiple levels.

The assessment team will need at least a day and a half for group discussions to foster full participation, obtain breadth and depth in responses, and agree on factor-specific scores. This could be organized to coincide with an already-planned meeting, such as a Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement partner meeting, a nutrition cluster

meeting, a multi-sectoral meeting, or a program planning or review meeting. In any case, a skilled facilitator should lead the discussion and at least one person should take notes. Both the facilitator and the notetaker should be familiar with the tool and with nutrition-related systems thinking.

Using the tool as a guide for individual interviews can require two or more weeks because of the time needed to schedule and conduct multiple interviews with people knowledgeable about each factor in the framework as well as various aspects of the design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the program. A skilled interviewer should conduct the interviews, and they should either be audio- or video-taped or recorded by someone taking detailed notes. Both the interviewer and the notetaker should be very familiar with the tool and with nutrition-related systems thinking.

Regardless of the method of data collection, a wide range of stakeholders, including program staff, funders, and beneficiaries from multiple levels and sectors, should be included in the process. Setting the tone for constructive, collegiate discussions is also important. This can be accomplished by explaining how participants' input will be used and scores developed.

Based on the responses to each question, points should be assigned: "0" indicating that nothing was done; "1" indicating that something was done, but not much; and "2" indicating that a significant amount was done. The assessment team may choose to use an alternate scoring system. Depending on the purpose of the assessment, the team lead(s) should assign points or discuss and agree upon the points to be allocated with stakeholders. This type of process can help engage stakeholders in the conversation. Whatever scoring system and process is used, it should be consistent across locations, programs, teams, and/or time points so that comparisons can be made, if desired. Once all questions in a given section have been assigned points, the assessment lead(s) should calculate the total, the maximum number of points possible, the percentage of points assigned, and summary comments.

How to Use the Findings

Assessment findings are intended to guide discussions, establish collaborations, facilitate learning, assign priorities, define gaps, and identify needed adaptations. In this way, they aid adaptive management as well as collaboration, learning, and adaptation (CLA).[3] But this can happen only if assessment teams present, share, and discuss findings, and stakeholders identify and take follow-up actions. Options for presenting the findings include—

- a radar chart presenting scores calculated for each factor (see figure 2)
- a graphic presentation of summarized conclusions related to each factor (see figure 3)
- a table of key findings (see table 1).

In group settings, stakeholders often share information and discuss issues as part of the process of answering questions and agreeing on scores, but if interviews are held with individuals separately, a meeting to share and discuss the findings as a group is essential. Meeting organizers can divide participants into small groups, with each discussing one of the factors, particularly what is needed to design, plan, and implement nutrition-related

[3] *Collaboration, learning, and adaptation* or CLA is a set of practices for improving program effectiveness. USAID encourages implementing partners to use these practices to "become more nimble, knowledge-driven and responsive to the evolving root challenges that programs and projects face in achieving development objectives" (USAID n.d.). For more information, see https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/media/StorylinePublished/story_html5.html and https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/cla-framework-and-maturity-tool-overview.

activities with a systems lens. After the findings are presented and discussed, groups may then agree on the score for each section.

Lastly, when using findings, it is important to encourage stakeholders to articulate concrete next steps. The findings could, for example, reveal a factor that is not being addressed, suggesting a need to shift resources, add or redesign interventions, or establish new partnerships.

The Systems Thinking Assessment Tool

The systems thinking assessment tool (STAT) is a series of questions related to each of the seven factors described above. These questions can help determine the extent to which systems thinking has been applied (see panel 1). Although the interrelationships between the factors—including positive and negative consequences and synergies with existing systems, programs, and structures—are equally, if not more, important than the factors themselves, the tool does not address them in a standalone section. Instead, questions pertaining to interrelationships and consequences are included as they relate to each factor.

Users should record responses to questions in the space provided below each question (expanding the space as needed) and record points allocated for each question and scores for each section in the right-hand column. At the end of each section, users can calculate a score for each factor and record summary comments.

Note: The tool may appear long but, depending on the scope of the program, one or more sections may be quickly completed.

1. Policies and Governance	**Points** (0/1/2)
Desired Status: The program has assessed policies and governance for nutrition at all levels and across relevant sectors, worked toward addressing weaknesses, considered the consequences of its work on other factors in the framework, and coordinated and/or established partnerships with others doing work in this area.	
A. Policies	
1.1. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or will do) to assess existing policies, plans, and strategies, needs, available resources, and key actors working in this area? EXPLAIN: Key actors include Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement groups, government, civil society, funding agencies, United Nations groups, academia, implementing partners, and the private sector. PROBE: Which national or subnational policies, plans, and strategies has [PROGRAM NAME] reviewed (or will review)?	
1.2. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or will do) to develop or strengthen national or subnational nutrition-related policies, plans, and strategies? IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS NOT DONE (OR DOES NOT PLAN TO DO) ANY WORK IN THIS AREA: Why not?	

1.3. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: What goals, objectives, and indicators has [PROGRAM NAME] established (or will establish) related to this work?	
1.4. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: As part of this work, how did (or will) [PROGRAM NAME] engage with other sectors? PROBE: With what other sectors has [PROGRAM NAME] engaged (or will engage)? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] been (or will be) engaged with other sectors?	
1.5. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework? PROBE: What are the factors to which [PROGRAM NAME] has connected (or will connect) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework?	
1.6. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
1.7. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities in this area? EXPLAIN: The consequences can be either positive or negative and can span sectors, levels, and factors of the systems framework. PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities?	

1.8. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: Through its work, has [PROGRAM NAME] contributed to (or will contribute to) any of the objectives or goals in the national nutrition plan, policy, or strategy?	
1.9. How has [PROGRAM NAME] coordinated (or will coordinate) with other agencies working in this area instead of or in addition to its own work?	
B. Governance	
1.10. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or will do) to assess needs, available resources, and key actors working to develop or strengthen nutrition-related governance? EXPLAIN: Key actors include SUN Movement groups, government, civil society, funding agencies, United Nations groups, academia, implementing partners, and the private sector. In terms of nutrition-related governance, we are primarily referring to multi-sectoral, multilevel coordination and collaboration of nutrition policies, plans, strategies, and/or programs. This tool deals with other aspects of governance in sections 2, 3, 4, and 5.	
1.11. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or will do) to develop or strengthen coordination and collaboration of nutrition policies, plans, strategies, and programs? IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS NOT DONE (OR DOES NOT PLAN TO DO) ANY WORK IN THIS AREA: Why not?	
1.12. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: What goals, objectives, and indicators has [PROGRAM NAME] established (or will establish) related to this work?	
1.13. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: As part of this work, how did (or will) [PROGRAM NAME] engage with other sectors? PROBE: With what other sectors has [PROGRAM NAME] engaged (or will engage)? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] been (or will be) engaged with other sectors?	

1.14. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
1.15. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
1.16. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities in this area? EXPLAIN: The consequences can be either positive or negative and can span sectors, levels, and factors of the systems framework. PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities?	
1.17. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: Through its work, has [PROGRAM NAME] contributed to (or will contribute to) any of the objectives or goals in the national nutrition plan, policy, or strategy?	
1.18. How has [PROGRAM NAME] coordinated (or will coordinate) with other agencies working in this area instead of or in addition to its own work?	
Total score:	
Count of points	

Maximum possible points	
Score = (count of points/maximum possible count) x 100	**%**
Summary:	

2. Infrastructure and Markets	**Points** (0/1/2)
Desired Status: The program has assessed nutrition related infrastructure and markets, worked toward addressing weaknesses, considered the consequences of its work on other factors in the framework, and coordinated and/or established partnerships with others doing work in this area.	
A. Infrastructure	
2.1. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or will do) to assess existing infrastructure and identify needs, available resources, and key actors working in this area? EXPLAIN: Infrastructure includes roads, health facilities, structures and spaces for local markets, water points, sanitation facilities, and schools. Key actors include SUN Movement groups, government, civil society, funding agencies, United Nations groups, academia, implementing partners, and the private sector. PROBE: Which aspects of infrastructure has [PROGRAM NAME] assessed (or will assess)?	
2.2. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or will do) to develop or improve infrastructure that may enable or limit improvements in nutritional status? IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS NOT DONE (OR DOES NOT PLAN TO DO) ANY WORK IN THIS AREA: Why not?	
2.3. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: What goals, objectives, and indicators has [PROGRAM NAME] established (or will establish) related to this work?	
2.4. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: As part of this work, how did (or will) [PROGRAM NAME] engage with other sectors?	

PROBE: With what other sectors has [PROGRAM NAME] engaged (or will engage)? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] been (or will be) engaged with other sectors?	
2.5. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework? PROBE: What are the factors to which [PROGRAM NAME] has connected (or will connect) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework?	
2.6. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
2.7. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities in this area? EXPLAIN: The consequences can be either positive or negative and can span sectors, levels, and factors of the systems framework. PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities?	
2.8. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: Through its work, has [PROGRAM NAME] contributed to (or will contribute to) any of the objectives or goals in the national nutrition plan, policy, or strategy?	
2.9. How has [PROGRAM NAME] coordinated (or will coordinate) with other agencies working in this area instead of or in addition to its own work?	

B. Markets	
2.10. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or will do) to assess markets as well as needs, available resources, and key actors working in this area? EXPLAIN: Key actors include SUN Movement groups, government, civil society, funding agencies, United Nations groups, academia, implementing partners, and/or the private sector. Market assessments are based on competitiveness, inclusiveness, and resilience, defined in *Leveraging Economic Opportunities*[4] as follows: 1. *Competitiveness:* System actors can effectively innovate, upgrade, and add value to their products and services to match market demand and maintain or grow market share. 2. *Inclusiveness:* The market delivers a sustainable flow of benefits to a range of actors, including the poor and otherwise marginalized as well as to society as a whole. 3. *Resilience:* System actors can address, absorb, and overcome shocks to the market, policy environment, resource base, and other aspects of the system.	
2.11. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or will do) to develop, strengthen, or improve markets that may enable or limit improvements in nutritional status? IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS NOT DONE (OR DOES NOT PLAN TO DO) ANY WORK IN THIS AREA: Why not?	
2.12. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: What goals, objectives, and indicators has [PROGRAM NAME] established (or will establish) related to this work?	
2.13. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: As part of this work, how did (or will) [PROGRAM NAME] engage with other sectors? PROBE: With what other sectors has [PROGRAM NAME] engaged (or will engage)? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] been (or will be) engaged with other sectors?	

[4] See: https://www.enterprise-development.org/wp-content/uploads/Market_Systems_Framework.pdf.

2.14. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework? PROBE: What are the factors to which [PROGRAM NAME] has connected (or will connect) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework?	
2.15. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
2.16. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities in this area? EXPLAIN: The consequences can be either positive or negative and can span sectors, levels, and factors of the systems framework. PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities?	
2.17. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: Through its work, has [PROGRAM NAME] contributed to (or will contribute to) any of the objectives or goals in the national nutrition plan, policy, or strategy?	
2.18. How has [PROGRAM NAME] coordinated (or will coordinate) with other agencies working in this area instead of or in addition to its own work?	
Total score:	

Count of points	
Maximum possible points	
Score = (count of points/maximum possible count) x 100	**%**
Summary:	

3. Inputs and Services	**Points** (0/1/2)
Desired Status: The program has looked across sectors and levels to assess the availability, affordability, accessibility, and quality of nutrition related inputs and services; worked toward addressing weaknesses; considered the consequences of its work on other factors in the framework; and coordinated and/or established partnerships with others doing work in this area.	
A. Inputs	
3.1. What did [PROGRAM NAME] do to assess availability, affordability, accessibility, and quality of nutrition-related inputs to determine needs, available resources, and key actors working in this area. EXPLAIN: Nutrition-related inputs include, for example, job aids for service providers, micronutrient and macronutrient supplements, seeds, fertilizers, food processing and storage equipment. Key actors include SUN Movement groups, government, civil society, funding agencies, United Nations groups, academia, implementing partners, and/or the private sector. PROBE: Which inputs did [PROGRAM NAME] focus on during these assessment activities?	
3.2. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or what will it do) to increase the availability, affordability, and accessibility, and quality of inputs? PROBE: Which inputs did [PROGRAM NAME] focus on? PROBE: Was [PROGRAM NAME's] aim to increase availability, affordability, and accessibility, and/or quality of those inputs? IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS NOT DONE (OR DOES NOT PLAN TO DO) ANY WORK IN THIS AREA: Why not?	
3.3. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: What goals, objectives, and indicators has [PROGRAM NAME] established (or will establish) related to this work?	

3.4. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: As part of this work, how did (or will) [PROGRAM NAME] engage with other sectors? PROBE: With what other sectors has [PROGRAM NAME] engaged (or will engage)? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] been (or will be) engaged with other sectors?	
3.5. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework? PROBE: What are the factors to which [PROGRAM NAME] has connected (or will connect) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework?	
3.6. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
3.7. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities in this area? EXPLAIN: The consequences can be either positive or negative and can span sectors, levels, and factors of the systems framework. PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities?	
3.8. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: Through its work, has [PROGRAM NAME] contributed to (or will contribute to) any of the objectives or goals in the national nutrition plan, policy, or strategy?	

3.9. How has [PROGRAM NAME] coordinated (or will coordinate) with other agencies working in this area instead of or in addition to its own work?	
B. Services	
3.10. What did [PROGRAM NAME] do to assess availability, affordability, accessibility, and quality of nutrition-related services to determine needs, available resources, and key actors working in this area. EXPLAIN: Nutrition-related services include, for example, those provided by health workers, extension and advisory workers, WASH committees, teachers, as well as those provided by private sector distributors and local vendors. Key actors include SUN Movement groups, government, civil society, funding agencies, United Nations groups, academia, implementing partners, and/or the private sector. PROBE: Which services were assessed?	
3.11. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or what will it do) to increase the availability, affordability, accessibility, and quality of inputs? PROBE: Which services did [PROGRAM NAME] focus on? PROBE: Was [PROGRAM NAME's] aim to increase availability, affordability, and accessibility, and/or quality of those services? IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS NOT DONE (OR DOES NOT PLAN TO DO) ANY WORK IN THIS AREA: Why not?	
3.12. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: What goals, objectives, and indicators has [PROGRAM NAME] established (or will establish) related to this work?	
3.13. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: As part of this work, how did (or will) [PROGRAM NAME] engage with other sectors? PROBE: With what other sectors has [PROGRAM NAME] engaged (or will engage)? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] been (or will be) engaged with other sectors?	

3.14. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework? PROBE: What are the factors to which [PROGRAM NAME] has connected (or will connect) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework?	
3.15. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
3.16. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities in this area? EXPLAIN: The consequences can be either positive or negative and can span sectors, levels, and factors of the systems framework. PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities?	
3.17. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: Through its work, has [PROGRAM NAME] contributed to (or will contribute to) any of the objectives or goals in the national nutrition plan, policy, or strategy?	
3.18. How has [PROGRAM NAME] coordinated with other agencies working in this area instead of or in addition to its own work?	
Total score:	
Count of points	

Maximum possible points	
Score = (count of points/maximum possible count) x 100	**%**
Summary:	

4. Information and Communication	**Points** (0/1/2)
Desired Status: The program has looked across sectors and levels to assess the current status of information and communication systems, approaches, and materials; worked to develop, improve, or use information systems and communication approaches and materials; considered the consequences of its work on other factors in the framework; and coordinated and/or established partnerships with others doing work in this area.	
A. Information	
4.1. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or what will it do) to assess nutrition-related information systems to determine needs, available resources, and key actors working in the area? EXPLAIN: Nutrition-related information systems include those for the collection and reporting of information/data related to health and nutritional status, health services provided, availability/construction of water or sanitation services, weather conditions, prices of agricultural inputs and produce, school meals provided, school attendance, or even school achievements, particularly but not only related to health and nutrition. Key actors include SUN Movement groups, government, civil society, funding agencies, United Nations groups, academia, implementing partners, and/or the private sector. PROBE: Which information systems were assessed?	
4.2. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or what will it do) to develop, improve, or use nutrition-related information systems? PROBE: Which information systems did [PROGRAM NAME] focus on? PROBE: Was [PROGRAM NAME's] aim to improve the quality or use of information collected? IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS NOT DONE (OR DOES NOT PLAN TO DO) ANY WORK IN THIS AREA: Why not?	
4.3. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: What goals, objectives,	

and indicators has [PROGRAM NAME] established (or will establish) related to this work?	
4.4. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: As part of this work, how did (or will) [PROGRAM NAME] engage with other sectors? PROBE: With what other sectors has [PROGRAM NAME] engaged (or will engage)? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] been (or will be) engaged with other sectors?	
4.5. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework? PROBE: What are the factors to which [PROGRAM NAME] has connected (or will connect) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework?	
4.6. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
4.7. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities in this area? EXPLAIN: The consequences can be either positive or negative and can span sectors, levels, and factors of the systems framework. PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities?	

4.8. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: Through its work, has [PROGRAM NAME] contributed to (or will contribute to) any of the objectives or goals in the national nutrition plan, policy, or strategy?	
4.9. How has [PROGRAM NAME] coordinated (or will coordinate) with other agencies working in this area instead of or in addition to its own work?	
B. Communication	
4.9. What did [PROGRAM NAME] do to assess nutrition-related communication approaches and materials to determine needs, available resources, and key actors working in the area? EXPLAIN: Nutrition-related communication approaches might include mass media, print media, community media, or interpersonal communication (one-on-one counseling in homes or facilities, support groups, etc.). All require material, whether television or radio spots, videos, flyers, posters, or job aids (e.g. counselling cards or key message booklets). Communication may be intended for social and behavior change or to disseminate/promote new national policies, plans, strategies, or protocols. Key actors include SUN Movement groups, government, civil society, funding agencies, United Nations groups, academia, implementing partners, and/or the private sector.	
4.10. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or what will it do) to improve, develop, and implement communication approaches and materials? IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS NOT DONE (OR DOES NOT PLAN TO DO) ANY WORK IN THIS AREA: Why not?	
4.12. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: What goals, objectives, and indicators has [PROGRAM NAME] established (or will establish) related to this work?	
4.13. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: As part of this work, how did (or will) [PROGRAM NAME] engage with other sectors? PROBE: With what other sectors has [PROGRAM NAME] engaged (or will engage)?	

PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] been (or will be) engaged with other sectors?	
4.14. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework? PROBE: What are the factors to which [PROGRAM NAME] has connected (or will connect) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework?	
4.15. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
4.16. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities in this area? EXPLAIN: The consequences can be either positive or negative and can span sectors, levels, and factors of the systems framework. PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities?	
4.17. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: Through its work, has [PROGRAM NAME] contributed to (or will contribute to) any of the objectives or goals in the national nutrition plan, policy, or strategy?	
4.18. How has [PROGRAM NAME] coordinated with other agencies working in this area instead of or in	

addition to its own work?	
Total score:	
Count of points	
Maximum possible points	
Score = (count of points/maximum possible count) x 100	**%**
Summary:	

5. Financing	**Points** (0/1/2)
Desired Status: The program has determined available financial resources for nutrition at multiple levels, assessed current systems for tracking nutrition financing, worked to increase those resources and/or improve those systems, considered the consequences of its work on other factors in the framework, and coordinated and/or established partnerships with others doing work in this area.	
5.1. What did [PROGRAM NAME] do to assess funding for nutrition and/or financing systems to determine needs, available resources, and key actors working in this area. EXPLAIN: Explain that financing systems include all those used for tracking costs, allocations and/or expenditures for nutrition-related activities. Key actors include SUN Movement groups, government, civil society, funding agencies, United Nations groups, academia, implementing partners, and/or the private sector.	
5.2. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or what will it do) to increase nutrition funding and/or strengthen systems for nutrition financing? PROBE: Was [PROGRAM NAME's] aim to increase funding and/or strengthen systems for tracking nutrition financing? PROBE: Did [PROGRAM NAME] staff participate in any effort to collect, analyze, and/or advocate for funding for nutrition? IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS NOT DONE (OR DOES NOT PLAN TO DO) ANY WORK IN THIS AREA: Why not?	

5.3. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: What goals, objectives, and indicators has [PROGRAM NAME] established (or will establish) related to this work?	
5.4. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: As part of this work, how did (or will) [PROGRAM NAME] engage with other sectors? PROBE: With what other sectors has [PROGRAM NAME] engaged (or will engage)? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] been (or will be) engaged with other sectors?	
5.5. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework? PROBE: What are the factors to which [PROGRAM NAME] has connected (or will connect) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework?	
5.6. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
5.7. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities in this area? EXPLAIN: The consequences can be either positive or negative and can span sectors, levels, and factors of the systems framework. PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities?	

5.8. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: Through its work, has [PROGRAM NAME] contributed to (or will contribute to) any of the objectives or goals in the national nutrition plan, policy, or strategy?	
5.9. How has [PROGRAM NAME] coordinated (or will coordinate) with other agencies working in this area instead of or in addition to its own work?	
Total score:	
Count of points	
Maximum possible points	
Score = (count of points/maximum possible count) x 100	**%**
Summary:	

6. Household Resources	**Points** (0/1/2)
Desired Status: The program has assessed resources available at the household level, adapted plans based on findings, worked to increase household resources and/or improve allocation of those resources for nutrition, considered the consequences of its work on other factors in the framework, and coordinated and/or established partnerships with others doing work in this area.	
6.1. What did [PROGRAM NAME] do to assess household resources, particularly those that might affect nutritional status, during the program planning phase? EXPLAIN: Household resources that might affect nutritional status include education, knowledge, skills, agency, access to support networks, self-confidence, and time, as well as financial resources and assets, including technology. Key actors include SUN Movement groups, government, civil society, funding agencies, United Nations groups, academia, implementing partners, and/or the private sector. PROBE: Did [PROGRAM NAME] conduct a survey or other rigorous means of data collection or review results of such a survey conducted by others?	
6.2. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or what will it do) to increase household resources or improve allocation of those resources for nutrition? IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS NOT DONE (OR DOES NOT PLAN TO DO) ANY WORK IN THIS AREA: Why	

not?	
6.3. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: What goals, objectives, and indicators has [PROGRAM NAME] established (or will establish) related to this work?	
6.4. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: As part of this work, how did (or will) [PROGRAM NAME] engage with other sectors? PROBE: With what other sectors has [PROGRAM NAME] engaged (or will engage)? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] been (or will be) engaged with other sectors?	
6.5. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework? PROBE: What are the factors to which [PROGRAM NAME] has connected (or will connect) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework?	
6.6. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
6.7. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities in this area? EXPLAIN: The consequences can be either positive or negative and can span sectors, levels, and factors of the systems framework. PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities?	

6.8. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: Through its work, has [PROGRAM NAME] contributed to (or will contribute to) any of the objectives or goals in the national nutrition plan, policy, or strategy?	
6.9. How has [PROGRAM NAME] coordinated (or will coordinate) with other agencies working in this area instead of or in addition to its own work?	
Total score:	
Count of points	
Maximum possible points	
Score = (count of points/maximum possible count) x 100	**%**
Summary:	

7. Sociocultural Environment	**Points** (0/1/2)
Desired Status: The program has looked across sectors and levels to assess the sociocultural context, worked to address enablers and barriers to optimal nutrition, adapted strategies and materials to the specific local sociocultural environment, considered the consequences of its work on other factors in the framework, and coordinated and/or established partnerships with others doing work in this area.	
7.1. What did [PROGRAM NAME] do to assess the sociocultural environment, particularly aspects that might affect nutritional status, during the program planning phase? EXPLAIN: The sociocultural environment includes things such as cultural or religious values and norms, gender roles and relationships, and family and peer group structures. Key actors include SUN Movement groups, government, civil society, funding agencies, United Nations groups, academia, implementing partners, and/or the private sector. PROBE: Did [PROGRAM NAME] conduct a survey or other rigorous means of data collection or review results of such a survey conducted by others?	

7.2. What has [PROGRAM NAME] done (or what will it do) to address enablers and barriers to optimal nutrition or influence the sociocultural environment to better enable improvements in nutrition? IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS NOT DONE (OR DOES NOT PLAN TO DO) ANY WORK IN THIS AREA: Why not?	
7.3. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: What goals, objectives, and indicators has [PROGRAM NAME] established (or will establish) related to this work?	
7.4. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: As part of this work, how did (or will) [PROGRAM NAME] engage with other sectors? PROBE: With what other sectors has [PROGRAM NAME] engaged (or will engage)? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] been (or will be) engaged with other sectors?	
7.5. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework? PROBE: What are the factors to which [PROGRAM NAME] has connected (or will connect) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] connected (or will connect) its work to other factors in the framework?	
7.6. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work at various levels (e.g., national, district, and community)? PROBE: At what levels has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work? PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] conducted (or will conduct) its work with other sectors?	
7.7. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: How has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities in this area? EXPLAIN: The consequences can be either positive or negative and can span sectors, levels, and factors	

of the systems framework. PROBE: At what stage(s) during design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation has [PROGRAM NAME] anticipated and addressed (or will anticipate and address) the consequences of its activities?	
7.8. IF [PROGRAM NAME] HAS WORKED (OR PLANS TO WORK) IN THIS AREA: Through its work, has [PROGRAM NAME] contributed to (or will contribute to) any of the objectives or goals in the national nutrition plan, policy, or strategy?	
7.9. How has [PROGRAM NAME] coordinated (or will coordinate) with other agencies working in this area instead of or in addition to its own work?	
Total score:	
Count of points	
Maximum possible points	
Score = (count of points/maximum possible count) x 100	**%**
Summary:	

Figure 2. Illustrative Radar Graph of Factor Scores from the Systems Thinking Assessment Tool

This radar graph presents a sample score calculated using the Systems Thinking Assessment Tool. Such results would not be sufficient to use as the basis of a decision but could be useful for initiating a discussion on comparative strengths and weaknesses of the program, comparing different programs, or monitoring the progress of a single program over time.

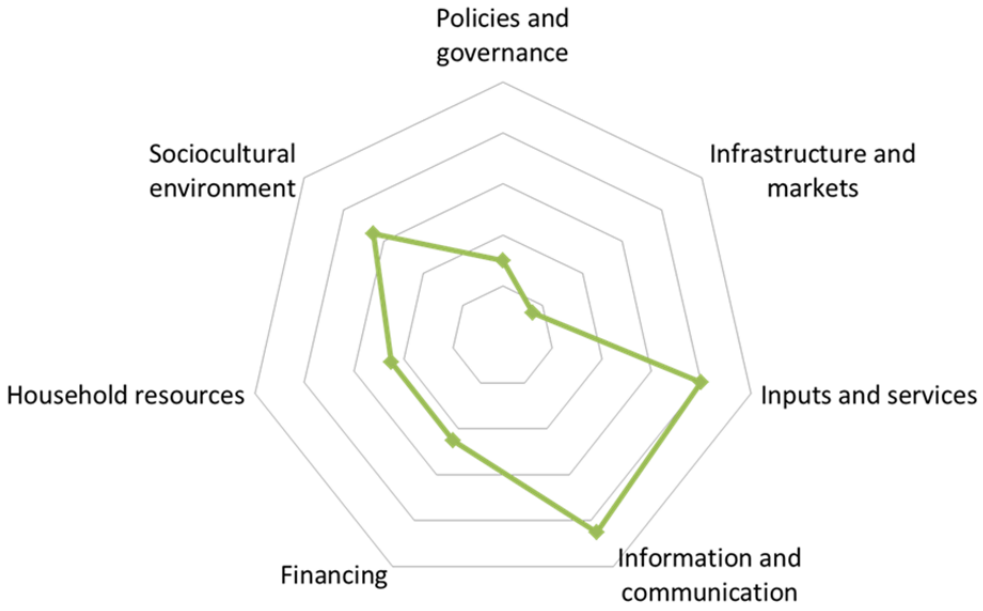
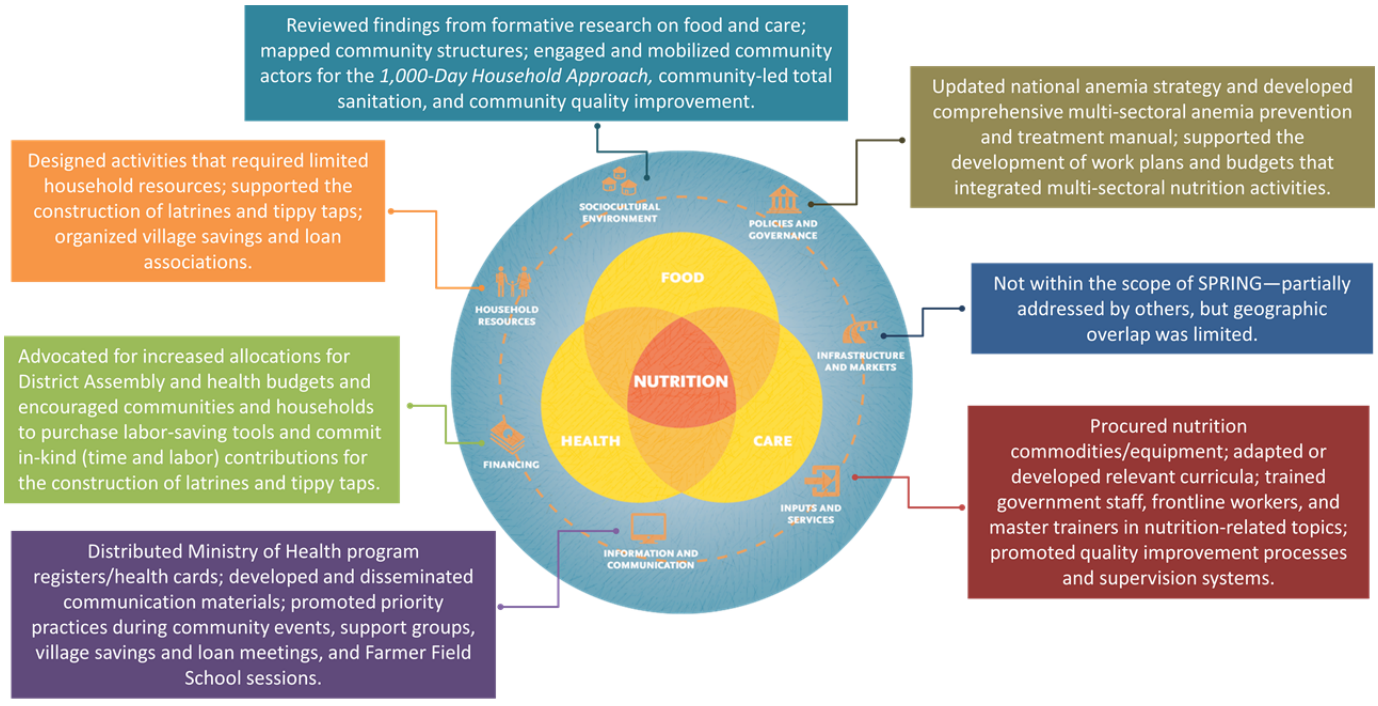


Figure 3. Illustrative Presentation of Summary Findings as an Overlay on the Systems Framework



You can also visually present the summary statements recorded in the tool surrounding the framework presented in figure 1.

Table 1. Template for a Tabular Presentation of Findings

This sample table is another way to present a summary of findings. While perhaps the least visually exciting, this format is often the most practical because it allows for the inclusion of recommended actions. It can also include a section on interactions, consequences, and change processes, but because these factors are not included in the tool, relevant content will need to be reviewed regarding the extent to which policymakers, program planners, and program managers recognize and address the interrelationships between factors, anticipate and prevent possible negative consequences, consider processes of change, and take advantage of synergies with existing systems, programs, and structures.

Factor	Findings	Recommended Actions
Policies and Governance		
Infrastructure and Markets		
Inputs and Services		
Information and Communication		
Financing		
Household Resources		
Sociocultural Environment		
Interactions, Consequences, and Processes of Change		

Additional Resources

What follows are additional resources for understanding and applying systems thinking in landscape analyses, program planning, and implementation. It is important to note that many of these resources have focused on single sectors rather than the full range of sectors and factors affecting nutrition. Furthermore, some are not specific to nutrition at all, but describe the process of systems thinking more generally.

1. **District Assessment Tool for Anemia (DATA)** was developed by SPRING to encourage multi-sectoral action at the district level. While the tool focuses on anemia, the interventions included in DATA are also applicable to general nutrition outcomes.
2. The **Nutrition Program Design Assistant** is a tool to help organizations design the nutrition component of community-based maternal and child health, food security, or other development programs. It includes a reference guide for understanding the nutrition situation and identifying and selecting program approaches.
3. SPRING's "recipe", **Building a Shared Vision for Good Nutrition, Growth, and Development in the Community**, was designed for policymakers, planners, and program managers working at various levels. It approaches the challenges of community-based nutrition service provision using a systems lens.
4. The **Systems Practice** workbook was designed by the Omidyar Group to help those working in a wide range of fields to apply a systems approach in order to achieve sustainable social impact.
5. The **5Rs Framework in the Program Cycle** technical note and webinar, **The 5Rs Framework: Supporting Local Ownership and Sustainability within the Program Cycle**, describe USAID's methodology for supporting sustainability and local ownership in projects and activities through ongoing attention to results, roles, relationships, rules and resources. The framework can be used to assess local systems, and to identify and monitor interventions designed to strengthen them.
6. USAID's **Framework for Supporting Sustained Development** describes "an overarching approach to transforming innovations and reforms into sustained development. Drawing upon USAID's experience, established good practice, and systems thinking, this Framework places local systems at the center of all our efforts to promote sustainability."
7. ***Taking the Long View: A Practical Guide to Sustainability Planning and Measurement in Community-Oriented Health Programming*** is a manual for project managers, planners, and evaluators of health projects in developing countries, which emphasizes the importance of systems thinking.

References

FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization). 2013. *State of Food and Agriculture*. Rome: FAO.

IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute). 2016. *Global Nutrition Report 2016: From Promise to Impact: Ending Malnutrition by 2030.* Washington, DC.

Levinson, F. J., Y. Balarajan, and A. Marini. 2013. *Addressing Malnutrition Multisectorally: What Have We Learned from Recent International Experience?* New York, NY: UNICEF.

Pomeroy-Stevens, Amanda, Madhukar B. Shrestha, Monica Biradavolu, Kusum Hachhethu, Robin Houston, Indu Sharma, and Jolene Wun. 2016a. *Pathways to Better Nutrition in Nepal: Final Report.* Arlington, VA: SPRING.

Pomeroy-Stevens, Amanda, Nancy Adero, Alexis D'Agostino, Hannah Foehringer Merchant, Abel Muzoora, Daniel Lukwago, Diana Tibesigwa, Edgar Agaba, Lidan Du, and Ezekiel Mupere. 2016b. *Pathways to Better Nutrition in Uganda: Final Report.* Arlington, VA: SPRING.

SPRING (Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally). 2015. *A Systems Thinking and Action for Nutrition: A Working Paper.* Arlington, VA: SPRING.

United Nations. 1998. "United Nations 'Indispensable Instrument' for Achieving Common Goals, Says Secretary-General in Report to General Assembly." Press Release SG/2048. September 21. https://www.un.org/press/en/1998/19980921.sg2048.html.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund). 1990. Strategy for Improved Nutrition of Children and Women in Developing Countries. New York: UNICEF.

———. 2013. Improving Child Nutrition: The Achievable Imperative for Global Progress. New York: UNICEF.

USAID (United States Agency for International Development). 2014a. Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development. Washington DC: USAID.——— 2014b. Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014–2025. Washington DC: USAID. Accessed June 30. http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1867/USAID_Nutrition_Strategy_5-09_508.pdf.

WHO (World Health Organization). 2010. Monitoring the Building Blocks of Health Systems: A Handbook of Indicators and Their Measurement Strategies. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO. http://www.who.int/healthinfo/systems/monitoring/en/.

SPRING
JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.
1616 Fort Myer Drive, 16th Floor
Arlington, VA 22209 USA

Tel: 703-528-7474
Fax: 703-528-7480

Email: info@spring-nutrition.org
Web: www.spring-nutrition.org

SPRING
Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally