**QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST**

FOR NUTRITION SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE & LIVELIHOODS PROJECTS

The agriculture and livelihoods sectors have key roles to play in reducing child undernutrition. However, **the link between improved agriculture yields or increased income and improved nutrition is not automatic**. A research exercise, which analysed over 7,000 agricultural programmes, found that the overwhelming majority were unable to prove their impact on reducing undernutrition[[1]](#footnote-1). Taking a nutrition sensitive approach to agriculture and livelihoods projects is therefore one of PIN’s programming priorities. In practice, this means:

* **Maximising their contribution to nutrition**: increasing dietary diversity (enough variety of food) and reducing seasonal hunger gaps (enough energy provided by food)
* **Ensuring these improvements are seen by those most at risk of undernutrition**: under 2 children and pregnant and lactating women
* **Promoting gender equity**: women’s decision-making power and control over resources (income, time/workload) is linked to improved nutrition of all household members[[2]](#footnote-2), two example pathways:
  + Given that many agriculture and livelihoods projects seek to increase income, ensuring women’s control over this means the project can have a wider nutritional impact
  + Agricultural or income generating activities can increase the workload for women, if we do not monitor increased workload levels for women we risk increasing the likelihood of life-threatening complications or restricted foetal growth during pregnancy[[3]](#footnote-3)
* **Targeting the poorest households** so that we are improving socio-economic equity in our target areas: the poorest households are often the most food insecure and have the worst nutrition statistics, so if we want to see improved malnutrition statistics, we have to be reaching the poorest, most vulnerable households.

The following checklist combines and condenses various technical resources, including FAO’s Designing Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Investments[[4]](#footnote-4). Undernutrition is a serious issue in all of PIN’s Country Programmes in Asia and Africa[[5]](#footnote-5). PIN recognizes that we have varying priorities and capacities across different programmes and therefore has created three levels that can be selected from:

* Level 1: Is a minimum standard and can be applied to most Livelihoods, Markets and Agriculture projects
* Level 2: Can be applied in programmes where you can draw on, or build multi-sectoral expertise in your team
* Level 3: Is where you have resources to invest in establishing a multi-sectoral project team

This checklist was developed for PIN’s Project and Program Managers, Heads of Programmes, Country Directors and Desk Officers:

* **When preparing new proposals**: they are able to check whether the proposal design is following the key principles of nutrition-sensitive agriculture or nutrition-sensitive value chains.
* **When monitoring a project:** they are able to check the nutrition-sensitivity of the ongoing activities
* **When evaluating a project:** they can include the below criteria into a ToR for an external evaluator

**LEVEL 1**

A minimum standard and can be applied to most Livelihoods, Markets and Agriculture projects.

At least 6 questions should be marked “yes” to achieve this level.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **YES** | **NO** | **N/A** |
| **MAXIMISING CONTRIBUTION TO NUTRITION** | | | | |
| 1 | Have we assessed the local situation so that we understand the main causes of undernutrition in the area? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Example questions: Is there a significant hunger gap period where people don’t have enough food? Is dietary diversity low all year round? Is there a particular food type (e.g. protein-rich food) that is missing from diets? Are there yearly peaks in waterborne diseases during the rainy season?* | | | | |
| 2 | Does the project’s logframe have nutrition-related indicators? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Remember to look at the Global Indicators of* [*PIN’s Nutrition Security Strategy*](https://www.clovekvtisni.cz/en/pin-rdd-strategy-2016-2021-nutrition-security-904pub) *and* [*www.Indikit.net*](http://www.Indikit.net) *you could use:* [*Minimum Acceptable Diet*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/18-minimum-acceptable-diet-mad)*,* [*Months of Adequate Household Food Provisioning*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/22-months-of-adequate-household-food-provisioning-mahfp)*,* [*Minimum Dietary Diversity-Women*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/15-minimum-dietary-diversity-women-mdd-w) | | | | |
| **TARGETING UNDER 2 CHILDREN AND PREGNANT & LACTATING WOMEN** | | | | |
| 3 | Are the impact indicators of the project disaggregated to measure the change in diets of mothers and children (instead of just looking at the household level)? | Y | N | N/A |
| **CONTRIBUTING TO GENDER EQUITY** | | | | |
| 4 | Has the design of the project’s activities used a gender analysis (e.g. did we consider the potentially different effects of the project on the workload of men and women?) | Y | N | N/A |
| *See PIN’s Gender Analysis Quality Standard Checklist* | | | | |
| 5 | Have we planned to collect feedback from men and women separately during the project (so that we can, for example, monitor the change of men’s and women’s workload)? | Y | N | N/A |
| **SUPPORTING SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUITY** | | | | |
| 6 | Have we analysed the situation of the most vulnerable households so we know their characteristics and understand the challenges to their livelihoods? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Example questions: who exactly are the vulnerable groups (gender, age, ethnic group), geographical location, what economic activities do they rely on, why are they vulnerable (e.g. debt, size of land or other external factors).* | | | | |
| 7 | Using this analysis, is the project providing opportunities for the most vulnerable to benefit? | Y | N | N/A |
| *The process of selecting project participants has to ensure they are motivated and willing to participate in our project. However, we cannot assume communities are economically homogeneous. There will be those that are food secure and those who are not. In order to eradicate food insecurity we have to work with those that are food insecure. So the project must understand that the most vulnerable may have different barriers to others and seek ways to address them.* | | | | |

**LEVEL 2**

Can be applied in programmes where you can draw on, or build multi-sectoral expertise in your team.

At least 15 questions should be answered “yes” to achieve this level.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **YES** | **NO** | **N/A** |
| **MAXIMISING CONTRIBUTION TO NUTRITION** | | | | |
| 1 | Are there explicit **nutrition security** objectives? | Y | N | N/A |
| *For example, the Global Objective could be “to contribute to improved Nutrition Security in XXXX target area”* | | | | |
| 2 | Does the project’s logframe have nutrition-related indicators? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Remember to look at the Global Indicators of* [*PIN’s Nutrition Security Strategy*](https://www.clovekvtisni.cz/en/pin-rdd-strategy-2016-2021-nutrition-security-904pub) *and* [*www.Indikit.net*](http://www.Indikit.net) *you could use: prevalence of* [*acute malnutrition*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/30-prevalence-of-acute-undernutrition-wfh-oedema) *or* [*stunted children*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/32-prevalence-of-stunted-children-hfa)*,* [*Minimum Acceptable Diet*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/18-minimum-acceptable-diet-mad)*,* [*Months of Adequate Household Food Provisioning*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/22-months-of-adequate-household-food-provisioning-mahfp)*,* [*Minimum Dietary Diversity-Women*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/15-minimum-dietary-diversity-women-mdd-w)*,* | | | | |
| 3 | Is it clear how each activity addresses one or more of the key causes of undernutrition? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Key causes include: Poor dietary diversity, seasonal food shortages (hunger gaps), poor infant and young child feeding practices and beliefs, poor maternal nutrition practices (e.g. what pregnant/lactating women eat), women’s control over resources (e.g. their time and income), infectious diseases (e.g. diarrhoea) and poor WASH practices* | | | | |
| 4 | Have we planned for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture technical capacity building for PIN’s field staff? | Y | N | N/A |
| *This could be a combination of budgeting for a visit by PIN’s Nutrition Security Advisor to provide on-job training, finding an in-country training or ensuring all project staff have finished PIN’s IPIN e-learning and FAO’s* [*e-learning*](http://www.fao.org/elearning/#/elc/en/course/NFS) | | | | |
| 5 | If we are using other local actors e.g. agriculture extension workers, does the project work on strengthening their capacities in nutrition-sensitive agriculture? | Y | N | N/A |
| **TARGETING UNDER 2 CHILDREN AND PREGNANT & LACTATING WOMEN** | | | | |
| 6 | Are the impact indicators of the project disaggregated to measure the change in or diets on mothers and children (instead of just looking at the household level)? | Y | N | N/A |
| 7 | Are pregnant and lactating women (PLW) or mothers of children under 2 specifically targeted? | Y | N | N/A |
| 8 | Does the project include behaviour change activities so that part of the increased household income (as a result of the project) will be used to buy nutritious food for 6-23m children and pregnant and lactating women? | Y | N | N/A |
| 9 | Do we understand (e.g. through a KAP survey) existing feeding practices of 6-23 month children so we can suggest realistic, focussed recommendations on 1. Adequate quantity and frequency of feeding and 2. Quality in terms of consistency of the food and nutrients? | Y | N | N/A |
| 10 | Do we understand (e.g. through a KAP survey) existing maternal nutrition practices (i.e. the diets of pregnant and lactating women) so we can make realistic, focussed recommendations? | Y | N | N/A |
| 11 | Have we planned and budgeted for formative research (e.g. a Barrier Analysis) so we can design effective behaviour change activities for any of the above 3 topics? | Y | N | N/A |
| **CONTRIBUTING TO GENDER EQUITY** | | | | |
| 12 | Has the design of the project’s activities used a gender analysis (e.g. did we consider the potentially different effects of the project on the workload of men and women?) | Y | N | N/A |
| *See PIN’s Gender Analysis Quality Standard Checklist* | | | | |
| 13 | Have we planned to collect feedback from men and women separately during the project (so that we can, for example, monitor the change of men’s and women’s workload)? | Y | N | N/A |
| 14 | Does the project include behaviour change activities regarding the division of domestic chores between men and women? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Consider monitoring this* [*http://indikit.net/indicator/78-gender-equality/328-men-s-participation-in-household-chores*](http://indikit.net/indicator/78-gender-equality/328-men-s-participation-in-household-chores) | | | | |
| 15 | Are there activities that encourage joint decision making between husband and wife on 1) the sale of crops, ensuring that a sufficient amount of food produced at home is always kept for consumption (as opposed to being entirely sold) or 2) the use of increased income for the purchase of nutritious food? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Consider monitoring this* [*http://indikit.net/indicator/78-gender-equality/326-household-decision-making-index*](http://indikit.net/indicator/78-gender-equality/326-household-decision-making-index) | | | | |
| 16 | Is anything being done/planned to ensure that women are able to control the income generated from selling their household’s agricultural produce? | Y | N | N/A |
| 17 | Have we included any of the following for women so they have access to finance especially during the hunger gap periods: capacity building on financial skills, access to finance and promoting saving practices? | Y | N | N/A |
| **SUPPORTING SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUITY** | | | | |
| 18 | Have we analysed the situation of the most vulnerable households so we know their characteristics and understand the challenges to their livelihoods? | Y | N | N/A |
| 19 | Using this analysis, is the project providing opportunities for the most vulnerable to benefit? | Y | N | N/A |
| *The process of selecting project participants has to ensure they are motivated and willing to participate in our project. However, we cannot assume communities are economically homogeneous. There will be those that are food secure and those who are not. In order to eradicate food insecurity we have to work with those that are food insecure. So the project must understand that the most vulnerable may have different barriers to others and seek ways to address them* | | | | |
| 20 | Are we collecting baseline and endline data to measure the impact of the project on the economic status of the most vulnerable? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Consider using* [*http://indikit.net/indicator/10-markets-and-income/283-progress-out-of-poverty-index-ppi*](http://indikit.net/indicator/10-markets-and-income/283-progress-out-of-poverty-index-ppi) *as a way of measuring the percentage of your target group in poverty at the start and end of your project* | | | | |

**LEVEL 3**

You have resources to invest in establishing a multi-sectoral project team.

At least 25 questions should be answered “yes” to achieve this level.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **YES** | **NO** | **N/A** |
| **MAXIMISING CONTRIBUTION TO NUTRITION** | | | | |
| 1 | Are there explicit **nutrition** objectives? | Y | N | N/A |
| *For example, the Global Objective could be “to reduce the prevalence of stunted children in XXXX target area”* | | | | |
| 2 | Does the project’s logframe have nutrition and nutrition-related indicators? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Remember to look at the Global Indicators of* [*PIN’s Nutrition Security Strategy*](https://www.clovekvtisni.cz/en/pin-rdd-strategy-2016-2021-nutrition-security-904pub) *and* [*www.Indikit.net*](http://www.Indikit.net) *you could use: prevalence of* [*acute malnutrition*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/30-prevalence-of-acute-undernutrition-wfh-oedema) *or* [*stunted children*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/32-prevalence-of-stunted-children-hfa)*,* [*Minimum Acceptable Diet*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/18-minimum-acceptable-diet-mad)*,* [*Months of Adequate Household Food Provisioning*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/22-months-of-adequate-household-food-provisioning-mahfp)*,* [*Minimum Dietary Diversity-Women*](http://indikit.net/indicator/1-food-security-and-nutrition/15-minimum-dietary-diversity-women-mdd-w)*,* | | | | |
| 3 | Is it clear how each activity addresses one or more of the key causes of undernutrition? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Key causes include: Poor dietary diversity, seasonal food shortages (hunger gaps), poor infant and young child feeding practices and beliefs, poor maternal nutrition practices (e.g. what pregnant/lactating women eat), women’s control over resources (e.g. their time and income), infectious diseases (e.g. diarrhoea) and poor WASH practices* | | | | |
| 4 | Have we planned for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture technical capacity building for PIN’s field staff? | Y | N | N/A |
| *This could be a combination of budgeting for a visit by PIN’s Nutrition Security Advisor to provide on-job training, finding an in-country training or ensuring all project staff have finished PIN’s IPIN e-learning and FAO’s* [*e-learning*](http://www.fao.org/elearning/#/elc/en/course/NFS) | | | | |
| 5 | If we are using other local actors e.g. agriculture extension workers, does the project work on strengthening their capacities in nutrition-sensitive agriculture? | Y | N | N/A |
| 6 | Did we **assess** whether there are other programmes (e.g. WASH) in the area that can be synergised with our intervention so that we better address the multi-sectoral causes of undernutrition? | Y | N | N/A |
| 7 | Did we **incorporate** these synergies with other programmes into the project design? | Y | N | N/A |
| 8 | Does the project improve people’s long-term access to seeds and inputs required to cultivate nutrient rich crops (e.g. vegetables, beans, vitamin-A rich orange flesh sweet potato, moringa)? | Y | N | N/A |
| 9 | Does the project increase access to drought-tolerant or short-term maturing varieties that can reduce the hunger gap duration and improve resilience to climate change? | Y | N | N/A |
| 10 | Does the project include increasing household access to water for irrigation, for crop production that can reduce the hunger gap or lean season? | Y | N | N/A |
| 11 | Do the agriculture activities include supporting the diversification of production to increase nutrient intake? E.g. Access to milk or eggs through livestock, vegetable or kitchen gardening activities | Y | N | N/A |
| 12 | Do the agriculture activities include supporting the diversification of production to increase energy intake throughout the year? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Remember that the diversification means growing different types of crops (e.g. vegetables, fruits), but can also mean introducing different types of staple crops that shifts the agriculture calendar so that there are more harvest times throughout the year. More harvest times can reduce the hunger gap duration and intensity.* | | | | |
| 13 | Does the project include improving processing, storage or preservation techniques to reduce to post-harvest losses/wastage and reduce the hunger gap period? | Y | N | N/A |
| 14 | Does the project include processing, storage or preservation techniques that immediately adds value to the product, or mean that it can be sold when prices are higher (instead of immediately after the harvest when there is a lot of supply to the market and prices are low)? | Y | N | N/A |
| 15 | Once we have prioritised which practices to focus on, have we conducted (or are we planning to conduct) formative research to be able to design an effective behavioural change strategy? | Y | N | N/A |
| 16 | Are there cooking demonstrations and promotion of nutritious recipes that use locally-available food? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Remember that these should include proper preparation techniques that retain nutrient content (e.g. preventing over-boiling). Positive Deviance/Hearth feeding sessions can be a way of demonstrating to communities how they can rehabilitate moderately malnourished children with locally available food (see PD/Hearth sessions Quality Standard Checklist)* | | | | |
| 17 | Are hygiene promotion activities included for safe food preparation? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Key hygiene promotion messages related to safe food preparation include: handwashing with soap/ash, washing ingredients, proper reheating of stored food, washing and clean storage of cooking utensils.* | | | | |
| **TARGETING UNDER 2 CHILDREN AND PREGNANT & LACTATING WOMEN** | | | | |
| 18 | Are the impact indicators of the project disaggregated to measure the change in or diets on mothers and children (instead of just looking at the household level)? | Y | N | N/A |
| 19 | Are pregnant and lactating women (PLW) or mothers of children under 2 specifically targeted? | Y | N | N/A |
| 20 | Does the project include behaviour change activities so that part of the increased household income (as a result of the project) will be used to buy nutritious food for 6-23m children and pregnant and lactating women? | Y | N | N/A |
| 21 | Do we understand (e.g. through a KAP survey) existing feeding practices of 6-23 month children so we can suggest realistic, focussed recommendations on 1. Adequate quantity and frequency of feeding and 2. Quality in terms of consistency of the food and nutrients? | Y | N | N/A |
| 22 | Have we planned and budgeted for formative research (e.g. a Barrier Analysis) so we can design effective behaviour change activities for any of the above 3 topics? | Y | N | N/A |
| 23 | If there are livestock activities, have we included the promotion of animal penning or chicken coups for increased production and minimising the infection risk from livestock faeces in the living spaces of young children? | Y | N | N/A |
| **CONTRIBUTING TO GENDER EQUITY** | | | | |
| 24 | Has the design of the project’s activities used a gender analysis (e.g. did we consider the potentially different effects of the project on the workload of men and women?) | Y | N | N/A |
| *See PIN’s Gender Analysis Quality Standard Checklist* | | | | |
| 25 | Have we planned to collect feedback from men and women separately during the project (so that we can, for example, monitor the change of men’s and women’s workload)? | Y | N | N/A |
| 26 | Does the project include behaviour change activities regarding the division of domestic chores between men and women? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Consider monitoring this* [*http://indikit.net/indicator/78-gender-equality/328-men-s-participation-in-household-chores*](http://indikit.net/indicator/78-gender-equality/328-men-s-participation-in-household-chores) | | | | |
| 27 | Are there activities that encourage joint decision making between husband and wife on 1) the sale of crops, ensuring that a sufficient amount of food produced at home is always kept for consumption (as opposed to being entirely sold) or 2) the use of increased income for the purchase of nutritious food? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Consider monitoring this* [*http://indikit.net/indicator/78-gender-equality/326-household-decision-making-index*](http://indikit.net/indicator/78-gender-equality/326-household-decision-making-index) | | | | |
| 28 | Is anything being done/planned to ensure that women are able to control the income generated from selling their household’s agricultural produce? | Y | N | N/A |
| 29 | Have we included any of the following for women so they have access to finance especially during the hunger gap periods: capacity building on financial skills, access to finance and promoting saving practices? | Y | N | N/A |
| 30 | Does the project introduce any labour-saving technologies for women’s tasks that could be included in the project to reduce the time women spend on agricultural or household tasks? | Y | N | N/A |
| **SUPPORTING SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUITY** | | | | |
| 31 | Have we analysed the situation of the most vulnerable households so we know their characteristics and understand the challenges to their livelihoods? | Y | N | N/A |
| 32 | Using this analysis, is the project providing opportunities for the most vulnerable to benefit? | Y | N | N/A |
| *The process of selecting project participants has to ensure they are motivated and willing to participate in our project. However, we cannot assume communities are economically homogeneous. There will be those that are food secure and those who are not. In order to eradicate food insecurity we have to work with those that are food insecure. So the project must understand that the most vulnerable may have different barriers to others and seek ways to address them* | | | | |
| 33 | Are we collecting baseline and endline data to measure the impact of the project on the economic status of the most vulnerable? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Consider using* [*http://indikit.net/indicator/10-markets-and-income/283-progress-out-of-poverty-index-ppi*](http://indikit.net/indicator/10-markets-and-income/283-progress-out-of-poverty-index-ppi) *as a way of measuring the percentage of your target group in poverty at the start and end of your project* | | | | |
| 34 | Does the project empower the most vulnerable to choose who they sell and get a good price for their products? | Y | N | N/A |
| *Often the most vulnerable groups do not have access or to transport to markets and they have to sell to a buyer/broker who has the power to dictate the price. There are different ways you can address this: providing transport or facilitating the creation of cooperatives so they have stronger negotiating power and access higher value markets. Another option are innovations such as this one in Zambia* [*http://innovation.wfp.org/project/virtual-farmers-market*](http://innovation.wfp.org/project/virtual-farmers-market) *which bypasses household transport issues* | | | | |
| 35 | If the project aims at increasing the market availability of nutritious food, does it include plans to monitor whether the prices of these foods are affordable for the target groups? | Y | N | N/A |

> Do you have a suggestion for improving the checklist’s content? Let us know: resource@peopleinneeed.cz

1. Webb, P. and Kennedy, E. (2014) Impacts Of Agriculture On Nutrition, Food and Nutrition Bulletin, vol. 35, no. 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UNICEF (2011) Gender Influences on Child Survival, Health and Nutrition: A Narrative Review <https://www.unicef.org/Gender_Influences_on_Child_Survival_a_Narrative_review.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. SPRING (2014) Understanding the Women’s Empowerment Pathway <https://www.spring-nutrition.org/publications/briefs/understanding-womens-empowerment-pathway> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. FAO (2015) Designing Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Investments, available here: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5107e.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. All of PIN’s Asia and Africa Country Programmes have child stunting levels above 20% [↑](#footnote-ref-5)