



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



# GLOBAL LEARNING NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

Integrating Nutrition Objectives into  
Agricultural Extension Programmes and Policies

**FINALIZATION WORKSHOP REPORT**

22 June – 1 July 2020

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# GLOBAL CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

FOR

## NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

Integrating Nutrition Objectives into Agricultural Extension Programmes and Policies

### Finalization Workshop Report

22 June – 1 July 2020



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2019-20, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) jointly developed a methodology and a guiding document for carrying out an assessment of the capacity of agricultural extension and advisory services (EAS) to promote nutrition-sensitive agriculture (NSA). The methodology was piloted at national level in five countries (at national level in Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi and Tajikistan, and at State level in the Indian State of Telangana). A global workshop was held on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 to present and review the methodology and the outcomes of the piloting process, to identify entry points for integrating nutrition objectives into agricultural extension structures, programmes and policies, to decide on future steps, and to develop a strategy and a way forward for the GFRAS Nutrition Working Group (NWG). The workshop was held online because of travel and other restrictions related to the COVID-19 emergency. Five two-hour sessions were held over a two-week period.

41 participants from 11 countries took part over the five online sessions. Many were struck by the similarities among different countries, which often faced the same issues in this field. The principal needs identified included an institutional mandate for nutrition in EAS organizations, improved cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination at all levels, integration of nutrition into academic training in agriculture, and capacity building at all levels. When cross-sectoral cooperation existed, it tended to be project-based, and therefore temporary and unstable. There was a widely perceived need for better documentation of good practices that should be shared and made visible among the nutrition and agriculture communities. It was agreed that the fundamental need was for effective advocacy, led by UN agencies such as FAO but with the support of local organisations and regional networks. Participants also agreed to change the name of the methodology from Global Learning Needs Assessment (GLNA) to Global Capacity Needs Assessment (GCNA) to better reflect the scope.

The GCNA methodology was found to be an effective tool overall for assessing capacities for integrating nutrition objectives into EAS. The piloting revealed that more time (at least six months) might be needed to allow follow-up with key informants, and a more flexible question format (rather than standardised matrices) might be more usable. The identification of financial resources for nutrition in EAS proved problematic, as these resources are not normally distinguishable within wider allocations.

Participants also suggested widening the scope of the investigation, a more active involvement of national ministries and local institutions, an Inception Workshop and more attention to logistics.

These suggestions are to be integrated for finalisation of the methodology.

There was clear interest from participants to continue efforts to strengthen capacities in Nutrition for Agriculture extensionists. Proposals for the way forward included the possibility of initiating a community of practice, and it was suggested that there was value in reviving the GFRAS Nutrition Working Group for activities at the global level, and collaborations for resource mobilization. Some of the activities that could be carried out through the above collaborative mechanisms could be: stakeholder mapping, mainstreaming of nutrition into programmes in agri-food chains, strengthen the coordination between the agriculture and health sectors, developing capacities at different levels, scaling up of interventions, advocacy and resource mobilization.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AESA	Agricultural Extension in South Asia
AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
AGDR	Agriculture Division of FAO
CAC-FRAS	Central Asia and Caucasus Countries Forum for Rural Advisory Services: Tajikistan
CET	Central European Time
EAS	Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services
ESN	Nutrition and Food Systems Division of FAO
ESP	Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division of FAO
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GCNA	Global Capacity Needs Assessment
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
GLNA	Global Learning Needs Assessment
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMMANA	Innovative Methods and Metrics for Agriculture and Nutrition Actions
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
INGENAES	Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services
MAFAAS	Malawi Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
MANAGE	National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, India
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
NIN	National Institute for Nutrition India
NIRD & PR	National Institute of Rural Development and Panchyat Raj
NSA	Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture
NWG	Nutrition Working Group
RELASER	Red Latinoamericana de Servicios De Extensión Rural: Chile
RESCAR-AOC	Réseau des Services de Conseil Agricole et Rural des Pays d’Afrique de l’Ouest et du Centre
RUFORUM	Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
SAA	Sasakawa Africa Association
SANE	Strengthening Agricultural & Nutrition Extension (SANE)
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
ZALF	Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research

## BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Building the capacities in nutrition of agricultural extension and advisory services (EAS) is widely considered a critical aspect to promote nutrition-sensitive agriculture (NSA) and help achieve household food and nutrition security. Under the auspices of the German-funded 'Strengthening Capacities for Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture and Food Systems' project (GCP/INT/714/GER), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in partnership with the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) initiated in 2019 a process to understand the gaps in learning and capacity among EAS providers in integrating nutrition objectives into agricultural extension programmes and policies. This process consisted of the development, the piloting at country level, the validation and dissemination of a Global Capacity Needs Assessment (GCNA) methodology aimed to assist countries in assessing their own capacity gaps in nutrition and EAS. The GCNA methodology was then pilot- tested in five countries in four regions by GFRAS member organizations. These assessments were led by the GFRAS Regional networks and Country Fora and consultants specifically associated with these networks. Country level workshops were carried out by GFRAS regional members to review the outputs of the pilot studies.

Regional networks involved in the pilot studies were as follows:

- AFAAS – African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services: Malawi
- RESCAR-AOC – Réseau des Services de Conseil Agricole et Rural des Pays d’Afrique de l’Ouest et du Centre: Côte d’Ivoire
- RELASER – Red Latinoamericana de Servicios De Extensión Rural: Chile
- AESA – Agricultural Extension in South Asia: India (Telangana State)
- CAC-FRAS – Central Asia and Caucasus Countries Forum for Rural Advisory Services: Tajikistan

Once the findings from pilot testing from the five countries were available, a process of revision of the methodology was initiated by GFRAS and FAO. A global workshop was then planned to gather inputs from external stakeholders, to assess the applicability of this methodology in other contexts and to propose it as a global tool.

A further objective of the workshop was to develop a strategy and way forward for the Nutrition Working Group (NWG) created by GFRAS a few years ago, which has been dormant since 2016. This group comprised members from Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services (INGENAES), FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The specific objectives of this workshop were as follows:

- Present the GCNA methodology jointly developed by GFRAS/FAO
- Share the findings of the piloting in each of the five countries and recommendations to inform the global methodology
- Incorporate these recommendations, and others that may emerge over the course of the workshop, into the methodology
- Identify entry points for integrating nutrition objectives into agricultural extension structures, programmes and policies
- Identify and agree on actions and actors for ongoing promotion of the use of the GLNA methodology, operationalizing and streamlining the methodology, and moving towards capacity development

- As part of the previous objective, develop a strategy and a way forward for the Nutrition Working Group (NWG)

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#### EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- GCNA methodology revised and finalised, on the basis of inputs collected and discussed during the workshop
- Identified entry points for integration of nutrition objectives in EAS programmes and policies
- NWG Working Group reanimated with a program of action
- List of proposed actions on the way forward

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKSHOP

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, it was decided to convene an online workshop. To facilitate participation from different time zones, five online meetings were scheduled between 13:30 and 15:30 (CET), on alternate working days from 22<sup>nd</sup> June to 1<sup>st</sup> July. Hlamalani Ngwenya was hired as facilitator, given her experience in this role and her familiarity with the subject matter. The workshop was run on the FAO-Zoom platform, with chat channels available for asynchronous discussion of the following topics:

- Capacity development
- Partnerships and collaboration to promote NSA
- Strengthening the role of EAS in promoting NSA
- Promotion of GCNA Methodology in other countries

Presentations, video and audio recordings of meetings, transcripts of the chat discussion and minutes of the meetings were made available on a dedicated FAO SharePoint folder (<https://unfao.sharepoint.com/sites/ESNE/GCNA%20Workshop/>).



## DAY BY DAY SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP SESSIONS

### DAY 1: 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE

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#### AGENDA

13:30-13:35	Introduction to the workshop (Day 1 program)
13:35-13:40	Welcome address (Anna Lartey, Director, ESN)
13:40-13:45	Opening remarks (Rasheed Sulaiman, GFRAS)
13:45-14:30	Introduction of the participants
14:30-14:40	Introduction to Zoom functionalities (Anthony Jennings, FAO)
14:40-15:05	Workshop objectives and participant roles: Strengthening capacities for nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems (FAO)
15:05-15:10	Quick overview of program and chatrooms (FAO)
15:10-15:25	Background to the workshop/Context and the role of GFRAS and country fora (GFRAS)
15:25-15:30	Wrap-up

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#### OPENING

Facilitator Hlamalani Ngwenya introduced the overview of the workshop program, ground rules, and Day 1 session outline.

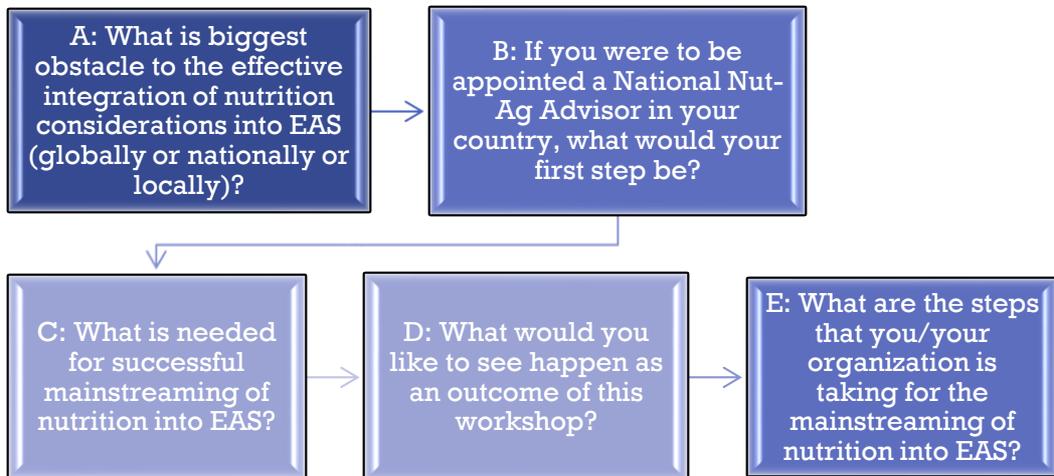
Prof. Anna Lartey gave her welcome speech on behalf of FAO. She highlighted the importance of nutrition capacity building in agricultural extension and advisory services and gave an example in Ghana where the opportunity of incorporating nutrition into training curricula had been missed. Finally, she thanked all the participants and administrative staff for their hard work in organising this workshop.

Rasheed Sulaiman V gave his welcome speech on behalf of GFRAS. He introduced the mandate, network and vision of GFRAS. He highlighted the partnership with FAO and expressed GFRAS's interest on further collaboration on theme of EAS and Nutrition. Finally, he thanked all the colleagues and participants and expressed his hope that the workshop would lead to a productive outcome.

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 INTRODUCTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Participants were requested to introduce themselves and answer one of the questions shown below.



The table below shows the questions picked, and the issue raised in relation to that question.

Name	Profile	Organization	Country	Question picked, and answer
Catherine Mthinda	Consultant for GLNA piloting in Malawi	MaFAAS (Malawi Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services)	The Republic of Malawi	D : Looking forward to learning the comments and discussion about the methodology
Ande Okiror	Nutrition advisor	SAA (Sasakawa Africa Association)	Ethiopia	B: Make sure to look at the impact of nutrition: nutrition is mainstreamed all levels
Botir Dosov	Consultant for GLNA piloting in Tajikistan	CAC-FRAS	The Republic of Tajikistan	A: nutrition aspect not well integrate in legal framework and national agricultural policy, strategy, and programmes
Constance Reif	Representative ZALF project on ag-Extension	ZALF (Leibniz center for land use and governance)	The Federal Republic of Germany	D: Learn the insight of methodology and how to implement in different setting
Dr. Lorena Rodriguez	Consultant for GLNA piloting in Chile	University of Chile	The Republic of Chile	A: Lack of coordination between agriculture sector and health sector

Global capacity needs assessment for nutrition-sensitive agriculture

Name	Profile	Organization	Country	Question picked, and answer
Nimisha Mittal	Consultant for GLNA piloting in India	AESA	The Republic of India	C: Coordination with different programmes
Mercy Akeredolu	Thematic Director of the Human Resource Development	SAA	The Federal Republic of Nigeria	D: Understand how to mainstream nutrition into the curricula through regular programmes or special programmes
Vinay Singh	Food security and nutrition expert	FAO India		A: Capacity gap at different levels
Dr Veenita Kumari	Deputy Director, Gender Studies	MANAGE (Institute of Agricultural Extension Management)	The Republic of India	A: different levels of knowledge, capacity and perception of stakeholders regarding nutrition
Francisco Aguirre	Consultant for GLNA piloting in Chile	RELASER	The Republic of Chile	A: Malnutrition problems faced
Harry Hoffman	Representative ZALF project on ag-Extension	ZALF	The Federal Republic of Germany	D: Interest in case studies if any common problems and how could be used to overcome gaps
Patrice Djamen	GFRAS Regional representative (west and central Africa)	RESCAR -AOC (Réseau de services de conseil agricole et rural de l’Afrique de l’Ouest et du Centre)	Burkina Faso	B: Set baseline and understand the need.
Ruobin Wu	Nutrition Mainstreaming Intern	FAO HQ		C: Understand the local context.
Stacia Nordin	Nutrition Education specialist	Strengthening Agricultural & Nutrition Extension (SANE)	The Republic of Malawi	A: Nutrition is too health centric; should see nutrition as foundational of agriculture; get rid of term “sensitive”
Noella Kamwendo	Project coordinator	FAO Malawi		C: Understand the global, country, and community context
Susan Kaaria	Senior Officer	FAO HQ		D: Get insight into GLNA and make sure gender issues well integrated

Name	Profile	Organization	Country	Question picked, and answer
Dr Surjit Vikraman	Associate Professor, Centre for CSR, PPP & PA	NIRD &PR (National Institute of Rural Development and Panchyat Raj)	The Republic of India	E: Capacity development in rural level; convergence of different stakeholders
Stefano Mondovi	Agriculture Officer	FAO HQ	-	E: Understand which kind of human resources needed; what kind of support needed for each steps; ensure the link from production to consumption
Edith Agbo	Consultant for GLNA piloting in Cote d'Ivoire	RESCAR -AOC	The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire	-
Rasheed Sulaiman	GFRAS representative	GFRAS and AESA	The Republic of India	C: Diagnosis and context assessment by using GLNA
Zofia Mroczek	Ag-Extension Specialist	FAO HQ		A: Recognition of the importance of nutrition to agriculture
Anthony Jennings	Capacity Development Specialist	FAO HQ		E: Set up cross sectoral working group; appoint capable people
Ana Islas Ramos	Nutrition Officer	FAO HQ		D: Expect vivid lively discussion; improve the methodology
Luis Amaya Ortiz	Programme Officer	FAO Malawi		A: How the nutrition sensitive approach can be practised at local level, practically and operationally
Delgermaa Chuluunbaatar	Agricultural Extension Officer	FAO HQ		A: 1) Structure; 2) Mind set; 3) Capacity

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## OBJECTIVES AND BACKGROUND

Delgermaa Chuluunbaatar introduced the objective of the workshop – to discuss the outputs of GLNA process and determine a way forward. She also explained the four expected outputs and encouraged all participants to be active.

Rasheed Sulaiman V introduced the background of the nutrition-agriculture situation which holds back millions of people from healthy diets and lives. He explained how NSA and EAS can overcome those challenges and the importance of the GLNA. Finally, he pointed out the role of GFRAS and its regional and sub-regional networks.

Anthony Jennings introduced the Zoom chat rooms in which participants could interact during the workshop period.

## DAY 2: 24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE

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### AGENDA

13:30-13:45	Overview of Day 2, recap of Day 1, chatroom discussions
13:45-14:15	Presentation of the GLNA (Ana Islas Ramos, FAO and Rasheed Sulaiman, GFRAS)
14:15-14:45	Country case studies: Topic 1. Strengthening the role of EAS in promoting NSA
14:45-15:25	Moderated discussion and proposals for Topic 1
15:25-15:30	Wrap-up

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### OVERVIEW OF DAY 2, RECAP OF DAY 1, CHATROOM DISCUSSIONS

Facilitator Hlamalani Ngwenya welcomed the workshop participants to the second session and presented its agenda. The recap of Day One consisted in participants answering the question: “Given the question(s) you had in mind, your expectations and what you heard in day 1, what was your *Aha!* moment or key lesson(s) learned?” The participants mostly pointed to the similarities that exist between different country contexts in terms of challenges to the integration of nutrition into extension and advisory services.

Anthony Jennings informed the group that the FAO IT team is working with the Zoom team to resolve issues related to the encryption of messages in the workshop’s chatrooms. He asked all workshop participants to update to the latest version of Zoom, as per the instructions he sent by email. Finally, he invited participants still experiencing problems to send him screenshots so that he can seek and/or provide suitable IT support.

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### PRESENTATION OF THE GLNA (ANA ISLAS RAMOS, FAO AND RASHEED SULAIMAN V, GFRAS)

Ana Islas Ramos presented the background behind the development of a capacity needs assessment for extension and advisory service providers. She proposed that the methodology be referred to as a ‘Global Capacity’ rather than ‘Global Learning’ needs assessment, or GCNA. The proposal was agreed to by the participants on the following day.

Rasheed Sulaiman V provided an overview of the GCNA methodology and of lessons learned during its development process, both from those who were involved in the pilot-testing of the methodology and from those who reviewed it.

Ande Okiror asked about the inclusion of groups such as men, the elderly and people with disabilities in nutrition interventions.

Veenita Kumari commented that the needs assessment should take into account the different value chains involved in nutrition from ground level to policy level to identify gaps that need to be addressed in order to strengthen nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

Harry Hoffmann asked about the length of time needed to conduct the literature review. Rasheed replied that GFRAS took around two months to conduct the literature review for the GCNA but the policy review took longer and was more difficult, especially when documentation was not available online.

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## COUNTRY CASE STUDIES: TOPIC 1. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF EAS IN PROMOTING NSA

Consultants who led the GCNA country pilots presented the structures addressing nutrition-sensitive agriculture in their country and their mechanisms, the challenges that are constraining the performance of EAS providers in promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and recommendations for how to strengthen the role of EAS providers in promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

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## MODERATED DISCUSSION AND PROPOSALS FOR TOPIC 1

The discussion began by focusing on questions of inclusion, especially of groups such as men, the elderly and people with disabilities in nutrition interventions. Nimisha Mittal mentioned that, in India, the elderly and the men are fed first in households while girls and women are fed last; creating the required behavioural change is the most difficult challenge. Mention was also made of the many cultural customs and preferences surrounding nutrition in Africa and affecting food consumption, which does not seem to be an issue that the GCNA is addressing. This raised the issue of behaviour change communication, and the extent to which extension agents should be trained in this skill.

There was some discussion of the need to take into account the different value chains involved in nutrition from ground level to policy level to identify gaps that need to be addressed in order to strengthen nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

Participants pointed out the lack of documentation in this area. Max Olupot said that not all nutrition-sensitive activities carried out by extension and advisory service providers are documented. Another example is kitchen gardens which provide vegetables but the documentation does not highlight their contribution to improved nutrition.

Luis Amaya Ortiz asked how we can capitalize the rich amount of available nutrition data to nurture the extension agenda. He also asked to what extent extension services in agriculture can establish a link with nutrition and social protection systems.

Ande Okiror commented on Chile's presentation in which it was mentioned that 25% of extension workers have a background in nutrition; he asked whether this percentage is low, medium or high. He also commented on Malawi's presentation, asking whether extension staff at the district-level has a linkage with district health staff, given the link between agriculture, nutrition and health.

Francisco Aguirre said that there are many organizations and institutions involved in nutrition but their interventions are poorly coordinated. He asked whether there is an example of a successful coordination mechanism.

Hlamalani Ngwenya then asked participants to respond to three questions related to the five pilot country presentations:

- What are the common threads?
- What are the differences?
- What are the major implications for strengthening the role of ESA in NSA?

Elements that were common to all presentations, as cited by participants included:

- the multiplicity of actors and lack of coordination between them
- the lack of a mandate for nutrition-sensitive agriculture
- limited funds and resources

- no or poor policy advocacy
- the need for mainstreaming of nutrition in agriculture
- structural and systemic issues
- the need for training and more general capacity building or strengthening
- the need for gender-sensitive interventions.

Differences cited by participants included:

- different actors and structures at country-level
- different health and nutrition problems (i.e. obesity in Chile vs. undernutrition in other countries)
- different institutional capacities
- different levels of coordination
- different levels of involvement of the private sector (e.g. very high in Côte d'Ivoire)
- different policy directions and strategies (e.g. nutrition as a development challenge)
- different roles of agriculture in nutrition and subsequently different roles of EAS providers (i.e. bio-fortification vs. diversification, nutrition education etc.) and
- different administrative levels for the country pilots (i.e. state-level in India vs. country-level elsewhere).

Major implications cited by participants included the need for:

- policy advocacy to promote the role of agricultural interventions in addressing nutrition and the role of EAS in addressing NSA
- mainstreaming nutrition in agriculture (including in training curricula) in collaboration with nutritionists and others, according to a holistic approach
- coordination platforms that allow multi-sectoral planning and implementation
- consideration of gender issues in nutrition and EAS
- more resources (human and financial)
- capacity building at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels
- a consistent household approach to target all household members
- better documentation and capitalization of experiences (particularly successful attempts at convergence, collaboration and partnership)
- breaking cultural myths and supporting positive behavioural change at the community-level
- advocacy at the field level (e.g. to involve para-professionals or non-nutrition officers) and
- the need to scale up NSA interventions to complement social protection (and other) support programs.

## DAY 3: 26TH JUNE

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### AGENDA

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 13:30-13:45 | Overview of Day 3, recap of Day 2   |
| 13:45-14:15 | Country Case studies: Topic 2. Partnerships and collaboration to promote NSA, and the role EAS could play in this (6 minutes per country) |

14:15-14:35	Moderated discussion and proposals for Topic 2
14:35-15:05	Country case studies: Topic 3. Capacity Development (6 minutes per country)
15:05-15:25	Moderated discussion and proposals for Topic 3
15:25-15:30	Wrap-up




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#### OVERVIEW OF DAY 3, RECAP OF DAY 2, CHATROOM DISCUSSIONS

Facilitator Hlamalani Ngwenya welcomed the workshop participants and provided an overview to the third day of the presentation and presented its agenda. The recap of Day Two consisted of participants answering the question: “What was the major highlight on the role of EAS for Strengthening NSA?” The participants mostly used the chatbox for pointing out these highlights. They pointed to

- lack of co-ordination and alignment between different interventions
- the need for capacity development at different levels
- the need for better documentation, evidence and advocacy
- the lack of clarity on the role of EAS, both among EAS themselves and other actors in NSA
- the need to take nutrition into consideration in the different segments of the value chain
- the need to mainstream nutrition in the curricula of Agricultural training of AES and develop capacities of AES actors

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## MODERATED DISCUSSION AND PROPOSALS FOR TOPIC 2: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION TO PROMOTE NSA, AND THE ROLE EAS COULD PLAY IN THIS

Consultants who led the GCNA country pilots presented, based on their country case studies, the successful cases of partnership and collaboration in addressing nutrition & NSA, focussing on lessons learnt, the question of why partnerships and collaboration are important, why this kind of collaboration is not happening to the desired extent and what needs to be done to promote partnerships.

During the discussion, Veenita Kumari asked about the role of the food safety committee in India, and how it will contribute to NSA. It is a new committee formulated to support nutrition and food security and works with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Ande Okiror asked about the role of the private sector, especially in India and Côte d'Ivoire

Sujeet Vikraman asked if there are any examples of convergence, or attempts at convergence, between health and agriculture.

Francisco Aguirre emphasized that it is necessary to understand the causes behind a lack of co-ordination. Vinay Singh replied that co-ordination may often be seen in individual projects, without being institutionalized.

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## COUNTRY CASE STUDIES: TOPIC 3. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT. PANEL DISCUSSION

Consultants who led the GCNA country pilots presented the capacity gaps at the enabling/policy level, organisational level and individual level, asking how we address these capacity gaps and what needs to be done.

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## MODERATED DISCUSSION AND PROPOSALS FOR TOPIC 3

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### THE NEED FOR ADVOCACY

Participants recognized the need for more awareness of the NSA concept, and discussed advocacy mechanisms and strategies. To initiate dialogue among key actors, regional and global networks are very useful. UN Agencies can play a major role in sensitizing National Governments and provide support in developing specific programs. In collaboration with other donors they could finance pilot programs to generate evidence on the impact of NSA on nutritional status.

It was suggested that the regional networks could organize workshops to mainstream ideas around NSA and the role of Extension at the regional level and at the country fora level. A core NSA team at State or District level, could promote NSA and synergize the expertise of all experts into a dedicated team. Knowledge management platforms of the networks could be used to promote good practices in this area, and members could be requested to write blogs on the topic, and use the print and the visual media to promote NSA and the role of EAS.

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### ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

It was agreed that more needs to be done to integrate nutrition into programs for agriculture students. A positive example comes from Malawi, where all extension students at diploma and degree level follow one or two nutrition courses. Under UNICEF leadership, Malawi has developed a curriculum. It was pointed out that a nutrition course for agriculture students should not be treated from an exclusively

health-centred angle, but also an agricultural one. RUFORUM handles curriculum development and pedagogical practice, but in Malawi the network only supports postgraduate students. The gap is with diploma and BSc level.

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## TRAINING MATERIALS

Some examples of training materials were mentioned, including the FAO e-learning modules on NSA (<https://elearning.fao.org/>), the Nutrition Sensitive Extension: NELK Module, downloadable from the GFRAS Website:

(<https://www.g-fras.org/en/knowledge/new-extensionist-learning-kit-nelk.html#module-16-nutrition-sensitive-extension>)

and the Sustainable Nutrition Manual prepared by Stacia Nordin for WFP

(<http://www.NeverEndingFood.org/Sustainable-Nutrition-Manual>).

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## SOFT SKILLS

It was agreed that because addressing nutrition would require behavioural changes related to cultivation and consumption within families, the EAS providers would need soft skills related to communicating about nutrition as well as technical competencies on the topic of nutrition. EAS agents need to be able to communicate their messages without being judgmental, communicate with different social groups, address the needs of the most vulnerable, and so on. It can be difficult to instigate behavioural change when it comes to the way food is prepared, given the prevalence of preconceived ideas and taboos. In terms of mindset change, it might be easier to target the younger population.

Participants agreed that extension agents should focus on the twin goals of NSA and gender integration, combining female empowerment with nutrition security goals. Gender-based labour division was also mentioned as an important factor. For instance, despite the fact that women in India plan meals for the whole household, they are only partially touched upon by the agricultural extension services. Efforts must be made to include them in NSA if it is to be effective.

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## SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMS

There was considerable discussion around school feeding programs as an opportunity to involve local producers in the supply of healthy foods. It was agreed that EAS could play an important role here. More nutritious and highly perishable foods (eggs, vegetables) are increasingly being included in school feeding programs. Farmers can be good providers for these programs and they need their role to be permanently integrated. Also, they need help to organize and to fulfil requirements. EAS could do a lot to prepare them for this.

In Chile there are some good examples of NSA (school food program and self-consumption program) but this is not the rule and these examples are still small-scale.

Ande Okiror said that nutrition needs to be win-win. He spoke of an experience where he was part of a program in which nutrition was used to reduce female dropout rates at school. The school's agricultural clubs and the community were producing food for the pupils. The community was thus able to earn money and help children complete school.

In countries like India, where school feeding programs depend largely on centralized procurement of grains, EAS could help as they know better what is produced where.

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## PRODUCTION FOR MARKET

A possible role for EAS agents in NSA was identified in attempts to increase production for market. In this case, they should be aware of the danger that a focus on sale may lead to less food being available for home consumption, or that following market trends may result in production of less diversified and less nutritious foods. However revitalizing local agricultural markets can help local populations access nutritious and diversified food, as well as improving their incomes (producing an indirect impact on nutrition).

Nimisha Mittal spoke of the situation in many villages in Telangana, India, where sometimes even if farmers are producing nutritious produce such as millets, they are not able to consume these as they do not have access to post-harvest technologies. Hence, building the capacity at the local level for consuming locally produced food can also be a role for EAS. The nature of intervention should be customized to the need of the community.



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## DAY 4: 29TH JUNE

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### AGENDA

- 13:30-13:45 Overview of Day 4, recap of Day 3, chatroom discussions
- 13:45-14:15 Country case studies: Experience of applying GCNA

14:15-14:25	Q&A
14:25-15:25	Potential for application of GCNA in other countries
15:25-15:30	Wrap-up and next steps

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## OVERVIEW OF DAY 4, RECAP OF DAY 3, CHATROOM DISCUSSIONS

Facilitator Hlmalani Ngwenya welcomed the workshop participants to the fourth session and presented its agenda. The recap of day three consisted of a reminder of the many acronyms used in the workshop, including GCNA, GFRAS, FAO, NSA, EAS, AFAAS, MAFAAS, AESA, CACFRAS, ReSCAR and RELASER.

Anthony Jennings summarized key issues emerging from the chatrooms. These included

- the need to explore and share experiences
- terminology (“Food and Nutrition Security” should always be used; preferences were expressed for ‘nutrition smart’ or nutrition focused’ over ‘nutrition sensitive’)
- the need to move from project-based cooperation to strengthening the system
- soft and hard skills: should agriculture extension agents be catalysts for behaviour change or technical specialists in value chains? Or both?
- the role of EAS in school feeding and local procurement initiatives
- the role of UN agencies in promoting NSA

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## COUNTRY CASE STUDIES: EXPERIENCE OF APPLYING GCNA

### MALAWI

Catherine Mthinda presented the application of the GCNA methodology in Malawi. She noted that it provided rich data at enabling environment and organisational levels but was more limited at individual level. However, focus group discussions at individual level provided plenty of NSA examples on the ground for each organisation, revealing the extent of NSA knowledge at field level.

Focus group discussions provided an easy access to individual capacity level assessment. The validation workshop yielded quality feedback, and was seen as a plus as it is normally skipped in many studies.

One difficulty was that nutrition in EAS does not have a budget which is separate from the general EAS budget, unless it comes through a project.

In-service training not only equips the staff but also motivates them into action.

Challenges included

- non-availability/non-response of key informants at organisational level, which required several calls and emails; and more time than was available.
- the data collection phase of the assessment being poorly timed in relation to the agricultural calendar.
- lack of investment figures on nutrition
- slow flow of funds for each step of the assessment

She suggested as improvements:

- adding an e-survey for stakeholder mapping to beef up information collected from key informants

- paying attention to sampling issues in terms of geographical focus, which must be representative
- allowing more resources (funds and time) for data collection to cater for repeat calls as well as the need to reach out to field staff
- refining the individual assessment tool to ensure questions are simple, relevant and in self-assessment mode
- including demographic data.

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## CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Edith Agbo then presented the application of the GCNA methodology in Côte d'Ivoire. She noted as strengths of the methodology that

- it allowed for a mapping of all key categories actors involved in nutrition, agriculture and EAS
- it gave an understanding of the nutritional and agricultural context of Côte d'Ivoire
- it was a very comprehensive tool for the evaluation of capacity gaps
- it foresaw the triangulation of results through a validation workshop.

The application of the methodology gave insights into linkages between nutrition and agriculture at farm/household level, and showed that

- nutrition is a large concept, and there are already some initiatives and achievements though still at a small scale and with limited synergy and coordination amongst actors
- farmers and livestock keepers don't yet fully realize that adequate nutrition can "save life and improve life", and could be achieved by most of them
- extension services are still focusing only on a few crops. Some crops critical for nutrition are not well considered (e.g. citrus fruits, legumes etc.)

Challenges included

- the unavailability of some of the targeted key informants and resource persons
- the difficulty of working on three level of capacities at the same time.

She suggested that a workshop be held at the beginning of the study to brief all participants. Other suggestions for modification of the methodology involved

- inclusion of diverse structures using EAS
- surveying perceptions of farmers on the quality of nutrition-related EAS provided by extension workers
- consideration of the diversity of farmers (i.e. livestock keepers, crop farmers)

To further develop the methodology, she suggested

- simplifying and translating it into an evaluation grid for the global system
- evaluating the extension workers on their capacities to sensitize and support farmers in designing and using cropping system that can further contribute to their nutritional needs
- that the study should be carried out by pairs i.e. nutritionist and EAS experts

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## INDIA (TELANGANA STATE)

Nimisha Mittal presented the application of the GCNA methodology in Telangana State in India. She noted that

- in contexts of under-nutrition and wasting in states like Telangana, the GCNA Methodology is a good tool to do a quick diagnosis
- it provides a framework for analysis and validation
- the methodology rightly points to the need for working with nutrition stakeholders beyond the traditional EAS in the agricultural and allied sector, which is essential to understanding NSA.

Challenges included:

- the fact that NSA is not really understood by many actors, making discussions often irrelevant
- the lack of a mandate for NSA in the agricultural sector (including animal husbandry and fisheries) and lack of connections between the agricultural sector and those of the women and child development, health, rural development and education sectors. This makes collecting relevant information more challenging.
- difficulty in getting data on investments
- the fact that many approaches like crop diversification, promoting millets (nutri-cereals), and doubling farmers income are being hailed as NSA.

Suggested modifications were

- to allow at least nine months to conduct a similar study
- to develop relationships with actors in the non-agricultural and allied sector, especially those who have never worked with agricultural sector

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## CHILE

Lorena Rodriguez presented on Chile. She noted that evaluating the context of nutrition and the mapping of different actors provided a good starting point. She mentioned the excessive level of detail expected and the lack of flexibility as limitations of the methodology. Challenges included the facts that:

- information from institutions and programs are not available on the web, therefore the interview was the key methodology.
- the Methodology requires more time for a deeper conversation and critical analysis between actors.
- it is not clear how to do advocacy at local and national technical and political levels, and seek for allies.

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## TAJIKISTAN

Nigina Rajabova and Botir Dosov presented on Tajikistan. They noted that this study is new in Tajikistan. The assessment integrates two groups, i.e. agricultural specialists and doctors. As a result, one part is more knowledgeable on agricultural issues and the other on questions related to diseases.

Challenges to the integration of NSA in EAS included:

- lack of knowledge among persons who provide EAS
- the fact that the mandate of organizations does not always correspond with the services they provide

- The need to go beyond the assessment of learning needs to consider the process of including / integrating nutrition goals into agricultural policies and programs
- The need to understand which reforms are being implemented, what they are aimed at, whether these reforms include nutrition issues, and if not, why?
- the need to identify whether such state institutions as Ministry of Agriculture and especially Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population are involved in this integration of nutrition goals in the policy of agriculture.

Thus the methodology needs to

- work at policy level to determine the ongoing dynamics among major players
- take account of all the diverse organisations involved, their size in proportion to the entire sector
- assess their decision making and action capacity, and their capacity for collaboration.

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#### GCNA METHODOLOGY: OVERVIEW AND LESSONS LEARNT

Rasheed Sulaiman V gave an overview of the methodology. It involves an assessment at 3 levels, covering

- the enabling environment
- organisational capacities
- individual capacities

Steps include are

- Nutrition and policy context mapping
- Stakeholder mapping
- Organisational capacity assessment
- Individual capacity assessment

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#### POLL

An online poll was conducted, with the following results:

1. If you believe that EAS agents in your country could play a more important role in improving nutrition, what would be the most important change to make this happen?

- |  |   |     |
|--|---|-----|
| • recognition of nutrition as part of the institutional mandate of EAS providers | 7 | 39% |
| • better inter-institutional coordination and collaboration                      | 5 | 28% |
| • training for the EAS agents  | 3 | 17% |
| • raising nutrition higher in the development agenda                             | 2 | 11% |
| • a change of mindset/culture  | 1 | 6%  |

2. Do you believe that a study of capacity such as the GCNA in your country would be

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| • essential   | 10 | 56% |
| • very useful | 7  | 39% |
| • useful      | 1  | 6%  |

3. In advocating for a GCNA in your country, what obstacles do you foresee?

- |  |   |     |
|--|---|-----|
| • funding  | 8 | 44% |
| • accessing data                                 | 7 | 39% |
| • time   | 5 | 28% |
| • identifying suitable consultants               | 4 | 22% |
| • adapting the methodology to your circumstances | 3 | 17% |

4. How interested would you personally be in promoting the use of the GCNA methodology in your country?

- |   |    |     |
|---|----|-----|
| • very interested   | 10 | 56% |
| • quite interested, but I have a lot of other commitments | 7  | 39% |
| • it would be difficult for me to be involved             | 1  | 6%  |

5. In your country, how important is the contribution of EAS agents in improving nutrition?

- |                   |   |     |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| • very important  | 9 | 50% |
| • limited         | 7 | 39% |
| • quite important | 2 | 11% |

6. In your country, how important is the role that EAS agents could potentially play in improving nutrition?

- |                   |   |     |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| • very important  | 9 | 50% |
| • quite important | 6 | 33% |
| • limited         | 2 | 11% |
| • not important   | 1 | 6%  |

7. Can you think of a good example of nutrition enhancement involving EAS agents? (If yes, we will follow up with you)

- |       |    |     |
|-------|----|-----|
| • Yes | 12 | 67% |
| • No  | 6  | 33% |

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## WRAP-UP

The moderator asked participants to answer the following questions in the chat-box:

Given what you know now:

- If you were to implement the GCNA methodology in your country, what would you do differently? (for example, what you change, add etc ?)
- In your country, who else should know about and/or use the GCNA methodology?

In response to the first question, ten participants suggested widening the scope of the investigation. Seven proposed a more active involvement of national ministries and local institutions. Six were concerned with the need for greater flexibility in order to adapt the methodology to the local context, and six felt more time was required. Four proposed an Inception Workshop and three more attention to logistics. Two respondents stated that the exercise should be followed up with advocacy activities.

Responses to the second question were as follows:

all stakeholders	7
government	6
NGOs	5
academia	4
students	1
UN agencies	1
Training bodies	1
Social protection agents	1
EAS	1
public institutions (e.g. prisons)	1

## DAY 5: 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY

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### AGENDA

13:30-13:45	Overview of Day 4, recap of Day 3, chatroom discussions
13:45-14:15	Priorities and main considerations identified by the workshop
14:15-14:25	National, regional and global levels
14:25-15:25	Nutrition Working Group
15:25-15:30	Wrap-up and next steps

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### OVERVIEW OF DAY 4, RECAP OF DAY 3

Facilitator Hlamalani Ngwenya welcomed the workshop participants to the last session and presented its agenda. She checked that the workshop allowed people to get to know each other, since this was one of the participants' expectations.

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### PRIORITIES AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE WORKSHOP

The facilitator summed up the main issues arising from the workshop as follows:

- improvements to the GCNA methodology
- mainstreaming of NSA in all programmes and agri-food value chains, and the structural/systemic issues related to this
- gender and other vulnerabilities, as well as household approach to be considered in mainstreaming NSA
- the need for coordination between the health and agriculture sectors, but also with other sectors such as social protection, and related challenges (e.g. nutrition being too health-

centred), the need for coordination platforms and institutional mandates, the limitations of project-based coordination

- Capacity development at different levels, needs assessment and mainstreaming of nutrition and NSA into academic (education and training) curricula, the need to define educational outcomes, the need for EAS agents to possess soft skills to deal with cultural customs, preferences and myths and facilitate behavioural change, and the need for better documentation of lessons
- Impact, scaling up NS interventions to complement social protection
- Policy advocacy, highlighting nutrition and NSA in legal frameworks
- Stakeholder mapping: lack of knowledge of stakeholders engaged in nutrition and NSA, importance of this exercise also for strategic partnerships
- Resource mobilization and investments

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## NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS

The facilitator asked the audience to reflect on who has a comparative advantage to do what at national, regional and global levels.

For the promotion and application of the GCNA methodology, it was agreed that each level has different advantages and a different role. Any interested actor can use it, especially those engaged in agriculture and/or nutrition. GFRAS country fora could apply this methodology working in partnership with FAO. The methodology should be first finalized at global level, taking into account the various inputs received, and then different countries can adapt it and use it, according to their own needs, though the question of ownership is important, for instance by the MoA. Advocacy is important for this.

To promote and mainstream NSA in programmes and value chains, and overcome structural and systemic issues, it is important to work at all levels. At country level, Ministries of Agriculture have the main role.

To improve coordination, it was suggested that perhaps country fora should engage more. Everyone has a role to play at every level, but champions are needed.

It was mentioned that GFRAS country fora do not always represent all concerned stakeholders, so that sometimes the Ministry of Agriculture may be a more appropriate coordinator, as well as FAO. There is a need to engage all agriculture stakeholders, not only EAS.

Documentation of lessons, research and impact could be done at national level, in coordination with the regional level, as well as with GFRAS and FAO (in a bottom up fashion).

On the question of capacity development and mainstreaming of NSA into academic curricula, Rasheed Sulaiman V pointed out that there are two types of curricula: educational and training. In India some institutes have already started training for EAS on nutrition, but there is a need to lobby for education councils in the country to recognize the importance of nutrition and NSA. The facilitator added that the regional and global levels also have a role to play. FAO is also producing learning material which brings commonality at global level.

Policies are set at national but also at regional and global levels. FAO and GFRAS have different global policy instruments. These discussions on mainstreaming NSA should be linked to the SDGs but currently this is not happening.

Stakeholder mapping can be done at national, regional and global levels.

Rasheed Sulaiman V argued that FAO and other UN agencies could lead efforts for resource mobilization, as they have considerable influence with donors. Ana Islas Ramos replied that donors also want to see the collaboration and the commitment of the people on the ground. Delgermaa Chuluunbaatar added that governments play a huge role in resource mobilization and they decide where the resources go. Moreover, FAO responds to government's requests, and a national investment plan is needed, not only funding for projects.

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#### NUTRITION WORKING GROUP

Ana Islas Ramos gave a presentation on the Nutrition Working Group, in order to get inputs on the potential role of this group, as there is the intention to revive it.

She explained that GFRAS Article XI Charter states that GFRAS can create working groups on a demand basis. There are already several such groups (policy, ICT etc.) and in 2016 an idea to create a NWG within GFRAS came up. The mandate of these groups is to make members available to respond to requests and provide inputs to discussion on specific issues raised by the GFRAS Secretariat or regional networks, develop strategies, make links to the regions and interest groups, and implement time bound activities.

The NWG vision was to be known for high-quality practical materials, and for emphasizing that job profiles for EAS workers should include nutrition competences. It should also promote training on nutrition, gather and disseminate evidence, work for the inclusion of nutrition in EAS policies and strategies, and enable EAS to speak about their role in the promotion of nutrition, coordination and resource mobilization.

The group's objectives at the time were to bring global attention to opportunities and challenges of leveraging EAS for improved nutrition via the engagement of researchers, donors etc. It was planned to collect and disseminate knowledge products by creating a depository of the materials, document experience of integrating nutrition into EAS, generate and disseminate research on the topic, and develop reference training and guidance materials.

The NWG has 4 work streams: advocacy, research and knowledge, capacity development, and coordination (internal and external).

Activities proposed at the time included starting policy dialogue among health, agriculture and other sectors, developing a handbook with case studies, raising awareness on research gaps, organizing knowledge events, developing a GCNA, organizing global and regional training and harmonizing learning materials, ensuring regular communication, and providing a database, a website, and an e-platform.

The NWG should operate according to established objectives, products and outputs which should be of common interest, jointly agreed and with a realistic roadmap, clear definition of roles and responsibilities of members, and consideration of financial implications (including human resources)- No specific timeline/end date was agreed.

Original members were GFRAS, Biodiversity International, FAO, IFAD, INGENAES, Sun Movement, and WFP, but the group was open to others. However, some changes in the membership and financial issues arising from delayed funding meant that some activities did not happen, and the group became dormant.

FAO is now proposing to reconvene the NWG. An FAO project could reconvene for one year but others need to consider if they have funding and interest to continue beyond that.

Rasheed Sulaiman V said that even during the pandemic, we can still do a lot with the funding: collect good practices, make a website, and develop policy briefs and other activities on knowledge

management. We can also use this year to raise more resources for later and build the ground for next years.

Francisco Aguirre emphasized that we need more coordination and a closer relation between agriculture and nutrition, so that the new group needs to have people from both sectors and with diverse backgrounds.

A quick survey of opinions was taken on whether participants saw such a group as useful. Those who responded were in favour.

## POLICY BRIEF

Zofia Krystyna Mroczek gave an overview of the policy brief series, and requested feedback and examples for a brief in preparation on EAS and NSA.

## GROUP PICTURE

A group picture was taken of the Day 5 participants.



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## WORKSHOP EVALUATION

A poll was held to gather participants' evaluations of the workshop, with the following results.

### Organization and logistics

Excellent	6	50%
Very good	6	50%

### Facilitation

Excellent	10	83%
Very good	2	17%

### The overall quality of the content and the presentations

Excellent	3	25%
Very good	5	42%
Good	4	33%

### Participation and discussion

Excellent	3	25%
Very good	7	58%
Good	2	17%

### Progress: lessons learned and clarity on next steps needed

Excellent	5	42%
Very good	5	42%
Good	2	17%

### Overall

Excellent	27	45%
Very good	25	42%
Good	8	13%

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## NEXT STEPS

Next steps were listed as:

- NWG discussion
- finalization of the methodology and country reports
- workshop report
- finalization of the policy brief
- publication of the GCNA and communication strategy
- further country pilots
- mapping of training materials and good practices,
- advocacy

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CLOSING REMARKS

Rasheed Sulaiman closed the workshop, thanking all participants on behalf of GFRAS. He considered the workshop a great learning experience for the GFARS community, and expressed the hope that it will not end here.



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