

**Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027:  
Making the case for investing in nutrition****October 2018****Why invest in nutrition?**

After over a decade of decline, **the number of people suffering from hunger is on the rise again**. In 2017 it was estimated that global hunger affected 821 million people around the world[1]. As a global community, we made the least progress on the MDG's addressing malnutrition. Despite progress in recent years, 152 million children are still affected by chronic malnutrition (stunting), approximately 50 million children suffer from acute forms of malnutrition (wasting) and childhood overweight is rising dramatically – currently affecting 41 million children. [2] Childhood malnutrition is exacerbated by issues such as low birthweight, low rates of exclusive breastfeeding, and micronutrient deficiencies such as anaemia and Vitamin A.

*The human cost of malnutrition*

Undernutrition has negative consequences for health: impairing growth in children, cognitive and physical development, weakening the immune system and increasing the risk of children dying earlier and living with disease. **Early childhood malnutrition costs children - and society - dearly, representing a devastating obstacle to development and a lifelong burden that prevents them from reaching their full potential.** For example, malnutrition can prevent children from attending school and even reduce the wages they will make as an adult.

*The economic cost of malnutrition*

Malnutrition is expensive, costing the global economy billions of dollars in lost productivity and GDP losses of up to 16.5% in some Sub-Saharan African countries[3]. Yet these consequences are almost entirely preventable. **Investing in interventions that give universal access to diverse, affordable, safe and sufficient nutritious food**, with particular attention to those most affected such as children, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women, **has the potential to save lives, help millions of children develop fully and thrive, and deliver greater economic prosperity.** Estimations also show that every dollar invested in nutrition interventions can generate a return of up to \$16 [4] and up to \$35 for breastfeeding interventions.[5] Nutrition investment has the potential to deliver “triple dividends” across the SDGs.

**How to achieve our goal on ending hunger**

The global community, and the European Union, have made strong commitments to fight hunger and malnutrition including: **Sustainable Development Goal 2** which represents a strong commitment to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030 and to leave no one behind; the **World Health Assembly (WHA) global nutrition targets**, to be reached by 2025, on the reduction of stunting, wasting, low birth weight and anaemia in women of reproductive age, together with an increase in the rates of exclusive breastfeeding and ensuring no increase in childhood overweight.

The EU has committed to support partner countries in **reducing the number of stunted children by at least 7 million by 2025**, reaffirmed in its Action Plan on Nutrition 2014-2020. The European Parliament also adopted a strong resolution on nutrition in 2016, where it calls “on the Commission, the Council, Member States and the international community, as well as on developing countries’ governments to mobilise, forthwith, long-term financial investments for food and nutrition security” and to address all forms of malnutrition.

In 2017, Council Conclusions “recalled the continued relevance of the action plan on nutrition adopted in July 2015, in particular of its three strategic priorities: to enhance mobilisation and political commitment for nutrition, to scale up actions at country level and to improve knowledge for nutrition. Although commending the Commission's active efforts to promote the nutrition agenda and to increase its funding for nutrition-related projects, the Council stressed its concerns over the fact that still 155 million children under the age of five are stunted today.”

Unfortunately, **despite all this commitment, the world is not on track to meet these targets and the EU’s own commitments are achievable only if nutrition continues to be prioritised and interventions scaled-up**. To date, global spending by donors on malnutrition represents only 0.5% of Official Development Assistance (ODA)[6] and it is estimated that nutrition-specific interventions alone would require an additional US\$7 billion annually to achieve the WHA global nutrition targets for 2025 and an additional \$23.25 billion per year to deliver SDG2[7]. In addition, with humanitarian donors refocusing on emergency contexts and failing to finance treatment for severe acute malnutrition in non-emergency contexts, there is a need for development donors to step up funding for treatment of severe acute malnutrition in all contexts, including development context.

### **The MFF 2021-2027: an opportunity to put nutrition at the core of EU external action**

The 2021-2027 MFF and in particular the newly proposed Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) - is pivotal to ensuring that the EU can substantially contribute to meeting the global nutrition targets and to eradicating all forms of malnutrition by 2030, as well as to meet the EU’s own commitments on stunting reduction by 2025.

**To achieve this objective, we call on all EU institutions to:**

1. **Safeguard the overall envelope of €123 billion the European Commission has proposed to dedicate to Heading VI – Neighbourhood and the World.**
2. Make **poverty eradication, combating inequality and the achievement of SDGs central objectives** of the NDICI, fully aligned with EU’s commitment to equity and aid effectiveness principles, reversing the current risk of development cooperation becoming secondary to the EU’s foreign policy and security goals.
3. **Maintain a 90% ODA-eligibility for the whole of Heading VI and 92% ODA-eligibility for the NDICI.**
4. Explicitly maintain ring-fenced levels of spending for health - including all forms of nutrition - education and social protection as per EU’s commitment to allocate at least **20% of EU ODA for human development and social inclusion**, across all programmes, geographic and thematic, annually and over the whole MFF period[8]. The scope of the human development

benchmark should not be extended to cover other policy areas such as gender equality which merits its own benchmark in line with the Gender Action Plan.

5. **Substantially increase the budget dedicated to Global Challenges under the Thematic Pillar** and integrate budgetary safeguards for nutrition under the Geographic programmes. Crucial initiatives and interventions at global level in areas that contribute to achieving SDG 2, including the Global Financing Facility, need to be supported by robust funding allocations.
6. **Improve language on nutrition as a specific area for intervention** within the Thematic and Geographic Programmes, following the framework established in the New European Consensus on Development, and adopt a cross-sectoral and human rights-based approach to end malnutrition, with the **inclusion of nutrition-sensitive interventions** (health, education, prosperity and employment, agriculture, gender, water, sanitation and hygiene).
7. **Make reference to the EU's Action Plan on Nutrition** as the framework that should continue to guide EU's interventions to improve nutrition, contributing to the achievement of the EU's commitment on stunting to support partner countries.
8. **Implement the humanitarian/development nexus** to close the humanitarian and development gap by investing in nutrition and enabling children with severe acute malnutrition to access treatment in all contexts, emergency and development alike.

Generation Nutrition EU is a network of a wide range of civil society organisations, working to see an end to child undernutrition. Members of Generation Nutrition include Global Health Advocates, Action Against Hunger, World Vision, Alliance2015, Save the Children and are working in different development sectors and are actively engaging with the EU, calling to scale up efforts and increase political and financial commitments to prioritise the fight against malnutrition, ensuring adequate and effective nutrition interventions and nutrition accountability mechanisms are in place.

We believe that, with strong political will, our goal of a world free of child deaths from undernutrition can be achieved within a generation.



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- [7] Save the Children, Nutrition Boost- Why the world needs a step change in finance for nutrition – and how it can be achieved, available at: - <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/gb/reports/health/nutrition-boost.pdf>. Thousand Days, Investing in Nutrition - the Foundation for Development, available at: <https://thousanddays.org/wp-content/uploads/Investing-in-Nutrition-The-Foundation-for-Development.pdf>
- [8] Reference: <http://www.ghadvocates.eu/wp-content/uploads/20percent-of-EU-ODA-for-health-education-and-social-protection-why-does-it-matter-for-the-next-MFF.docx-1.pdf>
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