

Advocacy to Reduce Malnutrition: Using PROFILES and Nutrition Costing

Nutrition advocacy is a platform to create movement toward greater political and social commitment to nutrition in a country. It is a planned, systematic, and deliberate process that is defined and shaped by the specific country context.

During the past decade, the global nutrition community has been converging on a common agenda to improve nutrition, built on previously separate efforts related to micronutrient deficiencies, breastfeeding promotion, complementary feeding, and others. Efforts such as the World Bank's strategy on "Repositioning Nutrition as Central to Development" in 2006, along with the establishment of the U.N. Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on Food and Nutrition Security, the Copenhagen Consensus (which concluded that nutrition interventions were among the most cost-effective in development), and The Lancet series on maternal and child nutrition (which provided a new evidence base for action on nutrition)—all in 2008—helped drive the formation of these movements. Specifically, initiatives such as the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (SUN), REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger), and the 1,000 Days Campaign have aspired to support country-owned, country-led strategies for addressing undernutrition.

FANTA's nutrition advocacy planning process complements these and other nutrition advocacy initiatives and can help streamline existing efforts in country by working with SUN networks and other program efforts to improve nutrition. This planning process is meant to be the initial phase of a broader nutrition advocacy process, followed by implementation of advocacy activities in country.



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A central focus of this process is to promote accountability for nutrition and strengthen nutrition governance.

What is FANTA's nutrition advocacy planning process, and what are the key elements?

FANTA's nutrition advocacy planning process engages national stakeholders by using a participatory and consensus-building approach toward a shared national vision for nutrition. It can support a given country at any stage along the way to providing nutrition services and reducing malnutrition.

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The nutrition advocacy planning process is helpful in situations where:

- The prevalence of many forms of malnutrition are high
- Investment, commitment, governance, and accountability for nutrition are low
- Nutrition services are fragmented and not holistic

Nutrition advocacy should be:

- Based on a sound understanding of the current country context for nutrition (scale of the problem, visibility, commitment, investment, and accountability)
- Systematic, planned, and deliberate—involving key stakeholders and targeting key audiences
- Part of a collaborative effort at the country level, including multiple government and nongovernment stakeholders

- Multisectoral by obtaining buy-in of stakeholders across sectors
- Directed toward those who are influential and can promote accountability and good governance

This process using PROFILES and nutrition costing promotes:

- Insight for action
- Consensus building and a shared vision for nutrition (“one voice”)
- Accountability and goal setting for investment in nutrition across the life cycle, including services along a continuum of care for the prevention and treatment of malnutrition

increase investment of resources to strengthen and expand implementation of nutrition services, and promote greater coordination between government and nongovernmental organizations that play a role in providing nutrition services across a country. By examining the context of the nutrition situation and tailoring advocacy needs to that situation, advocacy can be more effective in igniting change and making strides toward the desired outcome.

The three key elements of FANTA’s nutrition advocacy planning process are:

1. Nutrition Advocacy Plan and Material Development
2. PROFILES
3. Nutrition Costing

What is nutrition advocacy plan and material development?

A nutrition advocacy plan is developed to identify key audiences to be targeted by nutrition advocacy and determine a specific call to action for each. This is a critical step in the process as the plan lays out how to conduct nutrition advocacy in a systematic and coordinated way with all partners in country. In addition, the plan identifies monitoring and evaluation (M&E) indicators to track progress in achieving nutrition advocacy outcomes. Nutrition advocacy materials that support implementation of the nutrition advocacy plan are then developed, building upon and using results from the estimates generated from PROFILES and nutrition costing.

What is PROFILES?

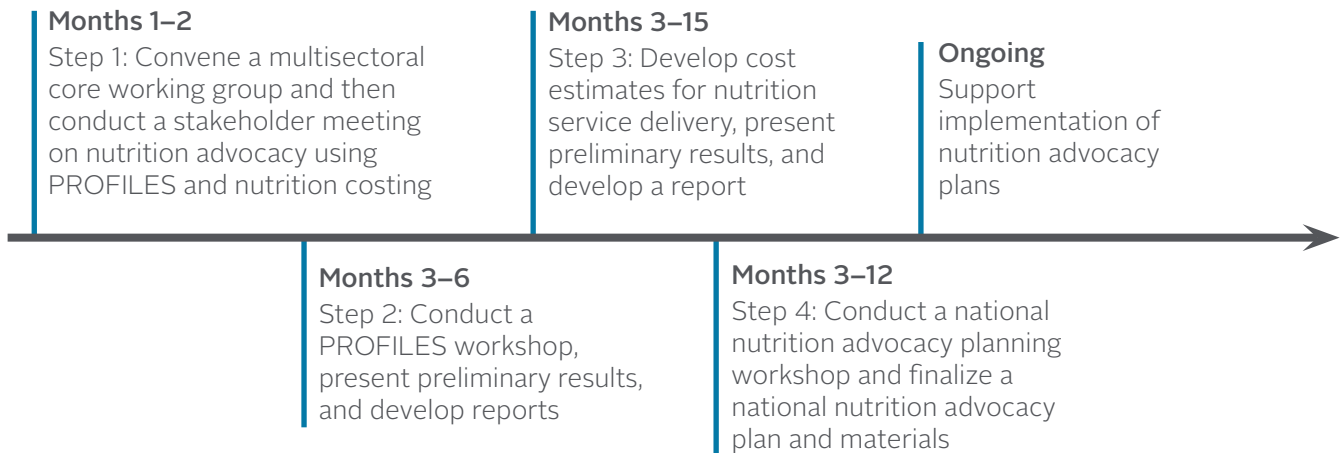
PROFILES is a spreadsheet-based nutrition advocacy tool used to calculate consequences if malnutrition does not improve or change over a defined time period and the benefits of improved nutrition over the same time period, including lives saved, disabilities averted, human capital gains, and economic productivity gains. PROFILES also includes a section where estimates are calculated for two risk factors of stunting. PROFILES estimates are based on reduction in the prevalence of several nutrition problems, such as iron deficiency anemia; low birth weight; vitamin A deficiency; iodine deficiency; suboptimal breastfeeding practices; and childhood stunting, underweight, and wasting. The stunting risk factor estimates are based on a reduction in a suboptimal complementary feeding practice (inadequate dietary diversity) and a reduction in teenage pregnancy. To calculate estimates, PROFILES

requires current country-specific information (e.g., nutrition, demographic, and employment data) that is identified and agreed upon in collaboration with stakeholders in country.

What is nutrition costing?

Nutrition costing estimates the costs of implementing a comprehensive set of nutrition programs or interventions in a country or prioritized geographic area over a specific time period. Nutrition costing is developed in country, considering the country-specific context, and is the result of a collaborative and participatory process during which multisectoral stakeholders define the assumptions on which nutrition costing is based—for instance, selecting necessary interventions and activities and defining a management structure for service provision—which in turn allows for the identification of the required inputs for each activity and estimation of the program cost for a specified time period.

Illustrative Timeline for Nutrition Advocacy Planning Process and Implementation



What is the difference between PROFILES and nutrition costing?

The estimates generated using PROFILES or nutrition costing answer different questions. PROFILES answers the question: What are the consequences if nutrition does not improve over a given time period or conversely, what are the benefits if nutrition improves over the same time period? The PROFILES estimates are presented in terms of health and development outcomes, such as lives saved or economic productivity gains. PROFILES gives you estimates that support the argument for why investing in nutrition is important and helps raise national awareness that malnutrition is a problem in a given country. However, it does not tell you how much it will cost a country to provide nutrition services to improve the nutrition situation.

In contrast, nutrition costing, like health costing, answers the question: How much will it cost to implement nutrition programs or interventions in a given country or prioritized geographic area over a specified time period? Costing in general is a useful approach for forecasting and planning the budget allocation required for specific services, but it is also useful for advocacy to increase the funding allocated to nutrition. As such, nutrition cost estimates complement PROFILES estimates. In fact, relative to PROFILES estimates, cost estimates are more tangible in that they provide policymakers with an estimate for how much they need to invest in nutrition each year in local currency amounts. Like PROFILES estimates, nutrition cost estimates can also be projected to a population level over multiple years.

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