



USAID
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Social and Behavior Change Design

Handbook for Resilience Food Security Activities During the Refinement Period



About USAID Advancing Nutrition

USAID Advancing Nutrition is the Agency's flagship multi-sectoral nutrition project, led by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI), and a diverse group of experienced partners. Launched in September 2018, USAID Advancing Nutrition implements nutrition interventions across sectors and disciplines for USAID and its partners. The project's multi-sectoral approach draws together global nutrition experience to design, implement, and evaluate programs that address the root causes of malnutrition. Committed to using a systems approach, USAID Advancing Nutrition strives to sustain positive outcomes by building local capacity, supporting behavior change, and strengthening the enabling environment to save lives, improve health, build resilience, increase economic productivity, and advance development.

Disclaimer

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Acronyms

BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
CHW	community health worker
CS	capacity-strengthening
DFSA	Development Food Security Activity
DIP	detailed implementation plan
FANTA	Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance
HCD	human-centered design
IDEAL	Implementer-led Design, Evidence, Analysis, and Learning
L-FFP	Legacy Office of Food for Peace
MEL	monitoring, evaluation, and learning
PCS	Program Cycle Support
PREP	Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal
RFA	request for application
RFSA	Resilience Food Security Activity
R&I	refine and implement period
RIA	required if applicable
SBC	social and behavior change
SOW	statement of work
TOC	theory of change
TPQ	Office of Technical and Program Quality
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	water, sanitation, and hygiene

Glossary

Barriers: Factors within or beyond an individual's immediate sphere of control or influence that hinder that individual's ability to perform behaviors effectively.

Behavior: A specific action performed by a specific actor/audience at a specific time or place.

Behavioral outcome: Changes in behaviors performed by a specific person or actor at a specific time or place.

Enablers: Facilitators of behavior change—structural, social, emotional—that make it easier for an individual or group of individuals to practice a behavior.

Factors: Barriers or enablers that prevent or support desired change. Factors fall across three levels: structural, social, and internal. Examples of factors include access to foods, social and gender norms, and family support.

Formative research: Research done early in project design (and after initial behavior prioritization) to “form” or shape project activities. The goal of formative research is to understand what people are willing and able to do in their context, who they need support from to practice the behaviors, and how they can be supported.

Gender: The social characteristics that groups associate with being a man or a woman. These include gender-specific economic, social, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities as well as roles and responsibilities. Gender is socially constructed, constituted differently across the world, and changes over time.

Pathways: Links between priority behaviors, factors that prevent or support the behavior, supporting actors, and activities to ensure the activities are based on contextual evidence. Pathways are used to design an SBC strategy, plan implementation, and set indicators.

Priority behaviors: Behaviors prioritized by program planners based on what people need to do to impact desired outcomes, what is possible in a particular context, and the fit with the program mandate and government priorities. Focusing on priority behaviors enables programs to achieve desired outcomes and avoid overwhelming staff and participants.

Segments: Groups of people who share characteristics, such as demographic characteristics, interests, beliefs, and needs.

Social norms: Norms are contextually dependent and collectively accepted representations of community conduct and individual conduct within communities.

Sources: [Breakthrough ACTION](#) n.d.; [USAID Advancing Nutrition 2022a](#)



Credit: Mark Wambui, Africa Lead

Background

The Role of Social and Behavior Change in Resilience Food Security Activities

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)-funded Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs) help save lives, strengthen livelihoods, and build the capacity to better manage shocks and stresses. RFSAs work to strengthen the adaptive, absorptive, and transformative capacities of communities vulnerable to malnutrition and food insecurity through multi-sectoral, integrated activities. Social and behavior change (SBC) is a central, fundamental approach to achieving these goals. What people do—their behavior—matters to all outcomes *across all sectors*. Human behavior is key to the success of any project. This is particularly important in the context of RFSAs, where the monitoring and evaluation indicators rely upon SBC programming. As such, sound SBC planning can directly lead to and support achieving RFSAs goals and objectives as identified in the activity theories of change (TOC).

SBC is the systematic application of iterative, theory-based, and research-driven processes resulting in change at individual, community, and society levels. SBC is grounded in several disciplines, including systems thinking, strategic communication, marketing, psychology, anthropology, and behavioral economics (Packard 2018). Social and behavioral outcomes play a critical role in TOC pathways for every sector, so SBC processes are fundamental for all sectors including governance; livelihoods; natural resources management; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); disaster risk reduction/management (DRR/M); health; and nutrition. All types of activities from communications and collective engagement; to quality improvement of systems, services, and products; to improving access to resources; can and should aim to improve behaviors and social norms by addressing the local factors that prevent or support change. Communication is often seen as the SBC activity but is usually not sufficient. When used effectively, SBC communication is more than one-way messaging.

The SBC strategy connects activities across the project to work together to address supply, demand, and the enabling environment at the right time to meet people's needs. The SBC strategy does not necessarily lead to separate, stand-alone activities.

BHA Support for SBC in RFSAs

USAID/BHA is committed to strengthening SBC in RFSAs. To prepare recommendations to improve SBC activities, L-FFP commissioned the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) III project to conduct a [review of SBC methods and approaches](#) (Packard 2018). The Implementer-Led Evaluation and Learning (IMPEL) project [reviewed 16 midterm evaluations](#) from 2015–20 (IMPEL 2020).

Box 1. Why Invest in SBC Across Sectors?

Theories of change invariably incorporate dozens of behavioral or social elements. This is because what people do shapes not only demand for services, products, and improved practices, but also improves efforts to increase supplies and enabling environments for change. As a result, RFSAs that apply SBC best practices achieve greater impact. Along with this and other lessons, a 2018 [review of SBC methods and approaches](#) conducted for Legacy Office of Food for Peace (L FFP) identified these challenges:



- The quality of SBC design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, including the use data for decision-making throughout the project, is **highly variable**.
- Implementers need guidance on **how to plan formative research** that will produce actionable results in time for designing activities that achieve social and behavior change.
- SBC strategies should be **evidence-based and co-created**, or, at a minimum, adequately integrated with project staff. A strong SBC strategy helps staff to make connections among their work, the TOC, and the SBC strategy. This engagement can make the SBC strategy an adaptive management tool. Often strategies are completed too late in to be very effective.
- When projects **engage community members and stakeholders** in being change agents rather than passive recipients, projects can identify and own local solutions, and sustain impact.

These reviews led to shifts in USAID/BHA's request for applications (RFA) pre-award and support to RFSA implementing partners starting during the refinement period and continuing throughout the life of the award.

Some RFAs from BHA now require—

- an SBC advisor among key personnel
- a draft list of priority behaviors by TOC purpose.

During the refinement period, BHA—

- recommends key steps to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate SBC
- provides supportive tools, such as a competency assessment for SBC programming and resources
- offers technical assistance through workshops and support to use SBC quality tools.

Since 2020 BHA has collaborated with support partners such as USAID Advancing Nutrition and Program Cycle Support (PCS) to support RFSA awardees to meet key milestones during the refine and implement (R&I) period as outlined in the BHA Refine and Implement Overview & FAQ. In 2023 USAID BHA's Office of Technical and Program Quality (TPQ), in collaboration with USAID Advancing Nutrition, finalized [Social and Behavior Change Parameters for Resilience and Food Security Activities during Refine and Implement](#) to lay the groundwork for this handbook. This handbook expands on key concepts identified in these document and in the work carried out with partners during R&I Inception and Culmination workshops.

Purpose of This Handbook

SBC is the *lynchpin* of achieving each purpose in the TOC. The R&I model, especially the refinement period, allows RFSA to review and test aspects of their TOC, complete necessary formative assessments, and pilot interventions so they can revise the TOC and project implementation plan based on these collective findings. Just as experiences and findings guide the TOC, they will also clarify pathways to social and behavior change and thus lead to modification in priority behaviors and the strategy for improving uptake and sustainability. The evidence-based, locally driven SBC strategy with relevant SBC capacity-strengthening activities should mirror and support the overall RFSA implementation plan.

The purpose of this handbook is to orient RFSA partners with step-by-step instructions for SBC best practices, providing practical tools for each milestone during the refinement period. Seven milestones are used to organize the best practice instructions and tools in (loosely defined) time periods in the refinement period. “Early refinement” lasts from award to the Inception workshop. “Mid-refinement” is when partners conduct pilots, learning, and research studies. “Late refinement” is the time prior to the Culmination workshop, and “later refinement” is between Culmination and the Year 2 Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal. Although the milestones are presented within these time periods, SBC uses iterative processes with continual learning and refinement during R&I and throughout the life of the project. This embrace of iteration for all approaches, including SBC, is a RFSA hallmark.

BHA recognizes that many resources are available for RFSA to design, implement, and measure quality SBC. This handbook pulls together existing resources that RFSA implementing partners can use during the refinement period, but is not prescriptive on any particular resource or approach. This handbook aims to assist in developing a clear roadmap for the end of the refinement period that includes—

- a manageable number of prioritized behaviors for each TOC purpose
- identified factors, or barriers and enablers, that prevent or support priority behaviors and that are informed by learning from relevant information gaps and formative research
- planned activities for each priority behavior in a logical format that address factors and influencers, those people who need to take action to address the factors
- alignment with and updates to the indicators in the monitoring evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan, reports—including the detailed implementation plan (DIP)—and annual reports.

Who Can Use This Handbook

This handbook is primarily designed for RFSA implementing partners during the refinement period, the first 12–15 months of a project. It is the culmination of more than five years of effort by USAID in close collaboration with various implementing partners, and learning and support projects. Best practice in SBC requires all teams—SBC, gender and youth, technical, management, MEL, and frontline workers—to contribute to designing SBC strategies to have the desired impact in social and behavior change. **Achieving effective social and behavior change requires all teams to play their part.** The work does not rest in the hands of SBC advisors. Therefore, this handbook is intended for these teams, including SBC leads. The following icons indicate which project team should focus on the aspect being discussed.



Technical advisors



SBC lead / team



**Senior management /
purpose lead(s)**



MEL lead / team



Strategic information lead



**Gender and youth
lead / team**

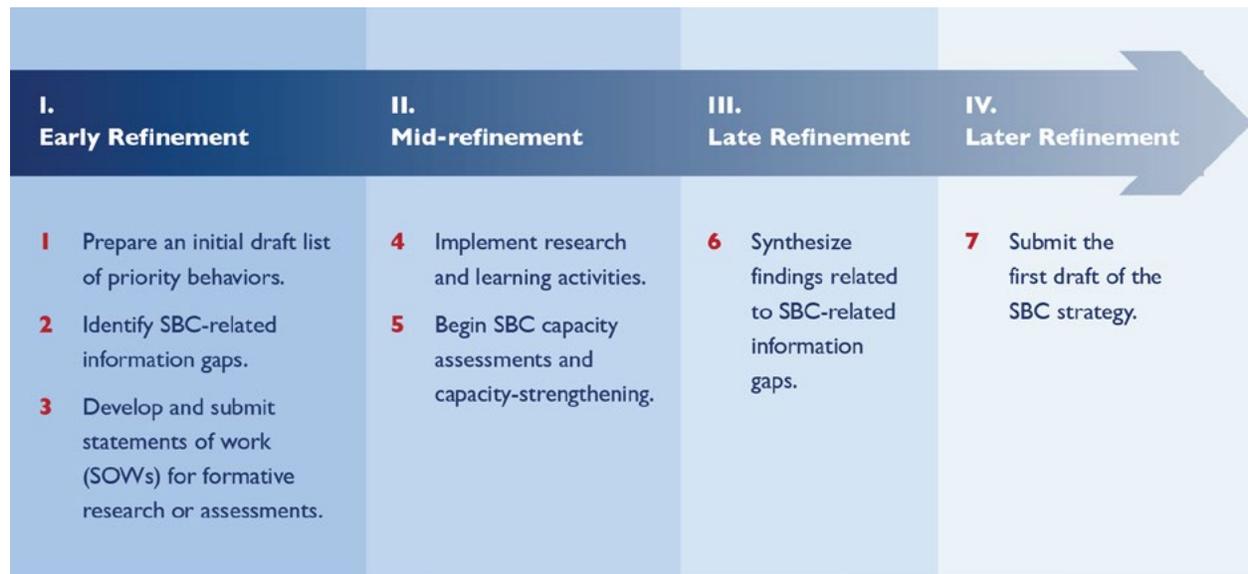


**Technical leads (livelihoods,
DRR/M, WASH, governance,
health and nutrition, etc.)**



Frontline workers

Figure 1. RFSA Project Cycle Social and Behavior Change (SBC) Milestones in the Refinement Period



Steps to SBC Best Practice in the Refinement Period

Pre-Award Considerations for a Strong SBC Foundation

While this handbook largely focuses on the refinement period post-award, SBC best practice starts with the application. A strong SBC design begins with identifying behaviors associated with the RFA goals and objectives. These behaviors are what people can do differently to achieve these objectives and goal. BHA suggests prioritizing no more than five behaviors per sector for impact and sustainability. These behaviors should be clearly identified in the TOC and narrative proposal, and linked to the logframe.

BHA also recommends noting a theoretical framework to guide social and behavior change programming in the application, and how the factors that influence each behavior will be understood, analyzed, and used to design evidence-based interventions that address multiple levels in the system. The social change element may build on local knowledge and facilitate community problem-solving, engaging local stakeholders and multi-disciplinary local expertise. SBC interventions should leverage existing community networks. The benchmarks and processes to track quality and measure progress in SBC are also part of the application. Finally, applicants must describe how they plan to identify and address any SBC capacity gaps of implementing staff, host government, local civil society members, community leaders, and community members. See the BHA [R&I Overview FAQ](#) for more details.

Box 2. Sustainability Factors



In recent years, USAID BHA has requested RFSA partners to identify outcomes that will be sustained beyond the life of the award, as well as services and behaviors. For each, partners are advised to describe how the project will address continued motivation, capacity, resources, and, if applicable, linkages to government and other systems. What does this mean for SBC? As referenced in the [parameters](#) document, all four sustainability factors are essential for quality SBC design. The [FANTA Sustainability and Exit Strategies](#) report has more details.

To begin, start by reviewing the required indicators and the required if applicable (RIA) indicators for the project. To show change in these indicators, consider what needs to happen to achieve the outcome indicator and then who needs to do it. This becomes the behavioral outcome or priority behavior. In some cases, achieving an indicator will require multiple behaviors. This [table](#) shows possible behaviors for required and RIA indicators with a clear behavioral component.

- For example, projects that implement activities promoting increased use of financial services will use the RIA indicator, “*Percent of farmers who used financial services (savings, agricultural credit, and/or agricultural insurance) in the past 12 months.*” The behavior closest to the outcome is “Farmers use financial services.” This is a behavior to include in the TOC and assess as a potential priority. In another example, project that implement activities promoting feeding children will use the RIA indicator, “*Percent of children 6–23 months receiving a minimum acceptable diet.*” This indicator has multiple behaviors including “Mothers breastfeed until children are at least two years old; Caregivers feed with age-appropriate frequency, amount, and consistency, while continuing to breastfeed the child; and Caregivers use a variety of nutrient-rich foods each day in the meals and snacks of their 6–23-month-old child.”
- Assess potential priorities depending upon what is needed in the local context to impact this indicator. Consider what it will take to achieve the changes, and to sustain these changes.
- The prioritized behavior(s) then fit into the TOC, and the change pathways in the TOC show how the project will achieve the behaviors, and thus, the indicators.



Credit: Karen Kasmauski

1. Early Refinement

Within the first months of receiving the award, review the preliminary list of priority behavioral outcomes to make sure they have the potential for greatest impact and sustainability. Partners are encouraged to share this list with BHA before the Inception Workshop and dialogue with BHA about what is being proposed. An initial list of behaviors will help focus knowledge or information gaps. This information is useful to bring to the Inception Workshop. Note that these milestones can be achieved in early refinement, but continue to be updated and refined over the refinement period.



By the end of early refinement, three milestones will be completed:

- 1. Prepare an initial draft list of priority behaviors.**
- 2. Identify SBC-related information gaps.**
- 3. Develop and submit statements of work (SOW) for formative research or assessments.**

MILESTONE 1

Prepare an initial draft list of priority behaviors.

Check the prioritized behaviors¹ in the application to be sure these have potential for impact and sustainability. New research or experiences may have become available since the application. Before designing activities, review these priority behaviors and be sure these are clearly identified in the TOC with logical change pathways (see Figure 2 below for examples). BHA suggests no more than five per sector, for maximum impact and sustainability. If the TOC suggests more than this, each purpose area or sector team can use a set of agreed criteria to prioritize. Examples of behaviors for different sectors can be found in the last pages of the worksheet linked at the end of this milestone. If the RFSA teams feel that the TOC must include more than this number, indicate the priority behaviors with a symbol to show that these will be emphasized during implementation.

Why?

- A 2018 [review of SBC](#) found that projects with fewer outcomes seem to have greater success. Fewer outcomes allow for sufficient depth of focus for resources, time, and efforts, helping to drive impact and sustained change.
- Less is more. Achieving the intended SBC requires aligning supply and demand at the right time for the right people in the right place. This requires concerted effort by multiple teams and levels across the project.
- Focusing attention and resources is key to achieve impact as well as sustainability. In recent years, USAID BHA has requested RFSA partners to identify outcomes that will be sustained beyond the life of the award, as well as services and behaviors.

How to align with SBC best practice?

- Agree as a project on [criteria](#) for a preliminary list, such as:
 - Which behaviors, if improved, will make the biggest impact on the goal for each purpose/objective?
 - Which behaviors are people willing and able to do within the context of their abilities or situation (if you have data or local knowledge)?

¹ Please see examples of multi-sectoral nutrition-related behaviors compiled in this USAID Nutrition Strategy Effective At-scale SBCC Guidance or in this USAID Advancing Nutrition summary. The USAID ACCELERATE project also developed examples from many sectors.

Box 3. Prioritizing Behaviors for Sustainability

Prioritize and define the behaviors for sustainability. For each behavior prioritized, consider what it would take to be sustained. Some behaviors may seem completely reliant on project inputs and, therefore, potentially not sustainable. In that case, consider whether they can be narrowed down to the first steps to getting to the behaviors that must be sustained and articulate the steps that follow intense project inputs needed for sustainability. This will prevent focusing on those actions that are solely in the project's purview and ensure that factors influencing sustainability are included in pathway development, implementation monitoring, and adaptations.



For example, when a project aims to assist farmers to realize a behavior such as “farmers use improved technologies,” without applying a sustainability lens, the steps that define the behavior could be the following: 1) Farmers access information about improved technologies, 2) Farmers access improved technologies, and 3) Farmers use improved technologies. This would leave out critical steps in the definition required to ensure sustained access to the technologies (Farmers work collectively to access improved technologies when they need them). 4. District agriculture offices include local farmers in planning and continue support to the capacity and motivation of those farmers and of those who support farmers to use the technologies.

- Which behaviors have high potential to be sustained after the project ends if time and resources are focused on addressing the factors needed for sustainability during implementation?
- Which of the listed behaviors are within the manageable interest of the project?
- Which behaviors lack support from other stakeholders?
- The preliminary list is based on scientific or other evidence of what behavior, if achieved, would result in achieving the goal. Note that community inputs are needed throughout the refinement period to confirm and refine the behaviors based on what people are willing and able to do in the local context.
- To prioritize the list for each purpose or result area, use existing data such as from a desk review, key informants, or local staff knowledge to assess all criteria. Note any questions or information gaps. These behaviors may come from a review of key indicators. If not, review the M&E plan to be sure that each priority behavior has an associated [tentative] indicator in the M&E plan to be able to measure change.
- The result is a draft, preliminary list of priority behaviors. At this stage, these can also be called behavioral outcomes. This list will become more specific during the refinement period with findings from relevant community engagement and research.

Consider using different colors or symbols to represent the change pathways to priority behaviors in the TOC.

Prioritizing does not mean that projects can only include these behaviors. Prioritizing means focusing more resources on the behaviors that will make the biggest impact. For example, a government policy or curriculum promotes a wide range of behaviors. Frontline workers will continue to use the full policy

Box 4. Example of Prioritizing Behaviors

Teams on one project reviewed their TOC and identified more than 50 behaviors across four sectors: governance, natural resource management, livelihoods, and health and nutrition. The SBC team facilitated discussions with each technical team to agree on which criteria to use to choose priority behaviors. Teams then worked independently to prioritize the behaviors within their sector. The initial list of 50 behaviors narrowed to 15: 4 in governance; 5 in natural resource management; 3 in livelihoods; and 3 in health and nutrition. The teams then came together across sectors to share prioritized behaviors and obtain consensus at the project level. This collaboration allowed each team to see areas of synergy and alignment toward the overall project goal. For example, several teams aimed to work with community leaders and with private sector actors, so they planned these activities together.

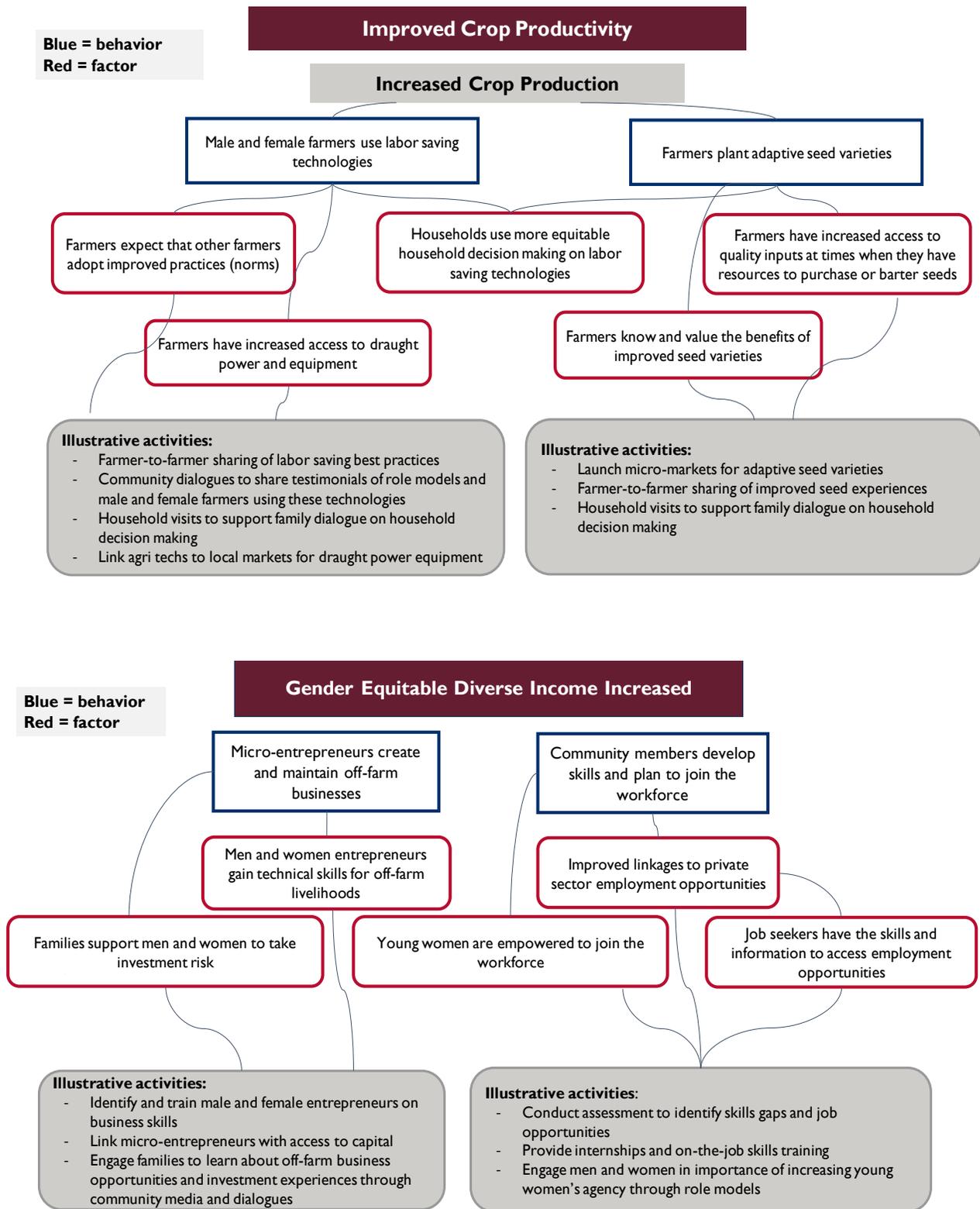


or curriculum. However, the project can ensure that priority behaviors get extra attention during frontline worker training and supervision, and implement multiple activities address the priority behaviors. Projects can also phase in priority behaviors. For example, a livelihoods team prioritized the behavior, “Farmers save money through financial services.” Monitoring showed that this was adopted by most farmers by year 2, so the team could then pivot to phase in another priority behavior: “Farmers invest in assets.”

Early Refinement Resources for SBC Milestone 1

- [Prioritizing Behaviors \[Worksheet\]](#)

Figure 2. Illustrative Examples of TOC with Behavior Change Pathways



MILESTONE 2

Identify SBC-related information gaps.

The refinement period offers a unique opportunity to use desk reviews, pilots, formative research, and community consultations to understand the local context, test initial change hypotheses, and validate assumptions that might have been used when prioritizing behaviors and developing pathways to change.

Information gaps help guide the design of these activities. This process, in turn, helps to refine the preliminary list of priority behaviors and planned activities to improve behavior and norms. These information gaps can help project staff understand the people, factors, and activities needed to prevent or support action. To ensure research and pilots are as useful as possible, identify and focus on information gaps related to the preliminary list of priority behaviors.

Why?

- SBC requires an understanding of the local context to refine the pathways that lead to change. Key elements of these pathways are barriers or enablers—together known as factors—which prevent or support people’s behaviors and social norms. Understanding these factors comes from asking “Why?” and “How?” regarding practicing improved behaviors. Each behavior likely has a number of sub-behaviors or steps. Include similar questions about these steps as relevant. Often data are available on behaviors such as everyday habits and even on underlying factors that influence situations, such as supply challenges, difficulties with quality services, and feelings or emotions. Data can rarely be found on the feasibility of change or what people can and are able to accomplish (and how), given their resources and context. The information gaps and subsequent research offer an ideal opportunity to test approaches with participant groups and communities.
- The refinement period is a limited time frame so focusing information gaps on the change pathways for priority behaviors helps develop a research strategy that leads to actionable insights.
- The gender and youth consultation during or around the time of the Inception Workshop will deepen insights and questions to include in answering information gaps for priority behaviors. Gender and youth are key dimensions of SBC processes and involve three interplays:
 - **Factors:** Gender and age dynamics are usually drivers or factors that prevent or support behaviors.
 - **Influencers:** Improving gender and youth outcomes that lead to behavioral outcomes requires engaging multiple influencers.
 - **Activities:** Most types of activities have gender and youth considerations.

Box 5. Example

Projects may work with communities to test effective ways to engage youth in community activities which can be important for multiple priority behaviors.



The project may start with listening to youth of different ages and situations to identify their interests, and how they would want to be engaged and recognized. Based on this learning, communities could work with different types of leaders, platforms, and activities to identify what is most meaningful and feasible.

How to align with SBC best practice?

- Begin the process with a desk review. Review existing information from program reports, published sources, and experts, including community members. Information from the region, if not the specific communities, can be used to begin activity design.
- If research is undertaken, engage project participants to answer questions about “Why?” and “How?” they can or cannot practice priority behaviors. This ensures interventions are grounded in the context, and focus on addressing the reasons why people can or cannot practice priority behaviors. Ask these questions of people who practice priority behaviors, their influencers, or a community action cycle.
- Examine structural, social, and internal factors at all levels of the socio-ecological model because knowledge and skills alone are not usually enough for people to adopt and maintain improved behaviors. Address specific, local factors, such as those described in USAID Advancing Nutrition’s [Factors That Influence Behaviors](#).
- Analyze each priority behavior using a preferred framework. This is an [example of a template](#); partners can use any preferred template.
 - The analysis will show available information and gaps in data, particularly about what prevents and supports structural, social, and internal factors. Remember to ask and answer “Why?” and “How?” people will accomplish the improved behavior.
 - Using existing data from the proposal context analysis will show which information is available for each factor and influencer. Using the template, note where research will be used to fill in gaps.
 - Complete the column for related required or RIA indicators.
- Use this analysis to complement the gender analysis. Usually, gender and social inclusion drivers will directly influence a behavior. This analysis, that turns into the SBC strategy, should dovetail the gender analysis to help operationalize the gender action plan.
- Consider what will be required to sustain change in each priority behavior after the project ends.

Box 6. Example of Identifying Information Gaps

A project's natural resources management (NRM) team worked with MEL experts to identify information gaps related to the behavior, "households use selective timber harvesting in forests." They found existing information from the region about the need to and benefits of engaging leadership to develop and enforce community bylaws and norms that prioritize sustainable forestry. Teams added this information to the factor column. Team members also had information from their own previous experience about attitudes toward this behavior, and also added that to the factor column. They learned that women and youth were less likely than men to practice selective timber harvesting due to roles in the household and community, but did not have information on why this was the case or how to support a change. These questions became information gaps (in red font in this example [Milestone 2 Example Behavior Analysis](#)).



- Some behaviors may require sustained service delivery or access to affordable inputs to be maintained (e.g., household members drink water from improved sources, or caregivers feed young children diverse diets). Even if a behavior does not require outside inputs, such as breastfeeding, when practiced for a defined period in a lifecycle, sustained services may be needed. For these behaviors, be sure to identify what the influencers need to act in a sustained manner.
- Other behaviors (e.g., farmers apply climate resilient agricultural techniques such as water harvesting, composting, or intercropping) may be sustained without outside inputs. For these, consider activities that will help people reflect on positive (locally defined) benefits and shift social norms to ensure motivation to maintain the behavior. Separate out what communities and households may be able to do on their own resources, or what government and others need to take on. It may help to add a maintenance step of the behavior in the analysis.

Early Refinement Resources for SBC Milestone 2

- [Factors That Prevent or Support Behaviors](#)
- [Information Gaps SBC Considerations \[Worksheet\]](#)
- [Behavior Analysis \[Worksheet\]](#)

MILESTONE 3

Develop and submit SOW for formative research or assessments.

Desk reviews, pilot tests, community consultations, gender analyses, participatory design approaches, and research studies provide opportunities to fill gaps in understanding priority behavior change pathways. In many cases, existing information from literature, documents or experts is sufficient to answer information gaps to design activities, while continuing to learn and adapt through implementation. If information gaps need to be filled to design activities and begin implementation, focus research on questions in the change pathways of prioritized behaviors that arise from asking why and/or how related to the primary actor or the influencers.

The starting point to a well-planned, actionable research study is a protocol or *statement of work (SOW)*. Prepare the protocol or SOW step by step with a clear, logical flow from each element to the next. The purpose of the research guides the objectives, which, in turn, shape the research questions, and so on.

Use findings from all types of desk reviews, research, pilots, and design approaches to fill in information gaps around priority behaviors, not only those marked as SBC or SBC communication studies.

Why?

- All types of activities in the refinement period can help address gaps in what is known about priority behaviors, context-specific factors that prevent or support these behaviors, and how to engage participant groups or test out solutions to design SBC plans.
- If primary data collection is pursued, focused research SOWs can guide findings that are actionable within the refinement period.

How to align with SBC best practice?

- Translate information gaps into specific, answerable questions.
- Determine what specific type(s) of information is needed to move forward.
 - Differences between groups to tailor approaches (e.g., Are child feeding behaviors practiced by first-time parents different from those of other parents?)
 - Action-oriented questions (e.g., Why are certain behaviors practiced among a particular group? For example, which livestock care behaviors are smallholder farmers willing and able to try, and what support do they need?)
 - Local solutions (e.g., What strategies might be successful in engaging project participants? What inputs are required to support and sustain water systems? How can the RFSA best engage in supporting sanitation coverage?)
- Determine appropriate methods to address information gaps, whether a desk review, community consultation, pilot, or other research based on the information needed. Use this [SBC Formative Research Decision Tree](#) to select methods to answer research questions. Often participatory methods will be more likely to answer the research questions and have the added advantage of engaging participants to raise local solutions.

- Prepare a sampling frame that clearly links the priority participant groups, including influencers. Consider all types of characteristics that may influence what people can do, and how, such as age, ethnicity, religion, marital status, and caste/class.
- Integrate the information gaps around priority behaviors and the pathways to improving these into all activities during the refinement period.
 - Community consultations are an opportunity to seek input from community members on contextualizing priority behaviors—what are people willing to try? What are the key challenges from their perspectives to improving those outcomes, and what are local solutions?
 - The gender and youth analyses unpack gender and age expectations and dynamics that influence the priority behavioral outcomes and how communities want to make changes.
 - Integrate questions into the gender analysis SOW as relevant, such as—
 - What gender, youth, and social dynamics prevent or support priority behaviors?
 - Who needs to be engaged to improve gender norms and social inclusion?
 - How will the project address those gender, youth, and social dynamics that prevent or support priority behaviors?
 - Pilots are opportunities to learn with specific participant groups what specific behaviors they are willing and able to do, in their context. What are the key challenges from their perspectives to improving those outcomes, and what are local solutions?
 - Co-create local solutions with community members to address a particular challenge related to a priority behavior. For example, a project that aims to improve sanitation may engage communities, masons, and entrepreneurs to co-create latrine design. A project that aims to protect watersheds may engage communities to identify ways to sustain collective action.
- Avoid duplicating efforts; maximize complementarity between required studies and other formative research and learning activities.
- Share learning from all types of research and learning activities in the refinement period with participants through preliminary interpretation of data and validation exercises with communities and stakeholders. Be sure that all teams within the RFSA understand the findings and to synthesize learning across studies and pilots that can be used to design activities.

Early Refinement Resources for SBC Milestone 3

- [Formative Research Technical Note \(forthcoming\)](#)
- [SBC Formative Research Decision Tree](#)
- [BHA 2021 SOW Template for Formative Research Activities](#)



Credit: Joni Waldron, Feed the Future

II. Mid-Refinement

Upon completion of the Inception Workshop, implement the pilot and/or research plans. Also assess any SBC capacity-strengthening needs for staff and frontline workers.

By the end of mid-refinement, two milestones will be completed:

4. Implement research and learning activities.
5. Begin SBC capacity assessments and capacity strengthening.



MILESTONE 4

Implement research and learning activities.

Conduct actionable research with local staff and partners according to the research SOW or protocol.

Why?

- Actionable formative research to inform SBC programming design requires focusing on information gaps related to priority behavior change pathways and planned SBC activities.
- Staff and partners are encouraged to participate in research design, data collection, analysis, and the use of formative research results to update the TOC to ensure ownership of the process.

How to align with SBC best practice?

- Carefully consider which data collection method(s) are most suited to answering the research questions identified through information gaps related to a priority behavior. Different data collection methods yield different types of information. For example, to learn what specific groups of project participant would be willing and able to do in their context, participatory user-centered methods are useful. Or, to understand why specific groups of people practice current behaviors, exploratory methods are appropriate. Within these methods, consider the research question. Focus group discussions generate community-level perceptions or ideas, whereas in-depth interviews are better to explore personal factors.
- During research and learning activities, challenge assumptions and test approaches such as food assistance, care groups, village savings and loan groups, and village committees to determine if these activities are the most appropriate to address SBC within the project context.
- During research consider what communities and households can do on their own, with their own resources, versus what other actors need to do for sustainability considerations.
- If using external consultants or a dedicated research partner, include time in the SOW and timeline for skills transfer to project staff and local partners. Develop a plan early to clarify how the data collected is managed, analyzed, synthesized, and interpreted in a manner that engages staff and local partners (e.g., plan a workshop with staff to synthesize the results of this research).

Mid-refinement Resources for SBC Milestone 4

- Formative Research Technical Note (forthcoming)

MILESTONE 5

Begin SBC capacity assessments and capacity-strengthening.

Project teams, partners, and frontline workers need a diverse set of capacities—relevant knowledge, attitudes, and skills—to deliver high-quality SBC at every stage of the project cycle and to sustain the activities. This capacity includes not only delivering SBC communication, but also skills to manage, design, implement, and measure all types of activities that address factors that drive social and behavior change. Capacity is a core pillar to achieving sustainability; a FANTA review for USAID found that technical and managerial capacity throughout the service delivery chain and among households and mechanisms to maintain that capacity were critical for sustainability (Rogers and Coates 2015).

During the Inception Workshop, implementing partners and BHA develop a shared understanding of expectations for the refinement period, including capacity development plans (USAID 2022). BHA expects that the work plan will describe activities to engage and develop the capacity of local partners, local government. Partners should also make a comprehensive, cohesive plan to strengthen staff capacity in technical areas and SBC, including cross-cutting approaches such as community engagement processes and adult learning methods (USAID 2022). Participatory competency assessments in the Refinement period can guide these targeted, needs-based strategies and tools and selection of indicators to track changes in performance.

Why?

- Achieving social and behavior change depends upon everyone involved with an RFSA. All project staff, local government, and community partners are needed to develop, implement, and monitor the SBC strategy.
- SBC design translates to quality implementation when staff and frontline workers who run activities get adequate support in addressing capacity needs prior to implementation.
- As frontline workers and local partners gain skills and confidence, project inputs can be gradually withdrawn for transition to post-project sustainability.

How to align with SBC best practice?

- Use a list of [SBC competencies](#) to conduct a participatory competency assessment. The assessment identifies existing strengths and opportunities for growth of staff, partners, and frontline workers. Tailor the list to be specific to the roles of each type of participant, and to the approaches that the project plans to use. This is an [example](#) for nutrition, but could be adapted to all sectors.
- Tailor capacity-strengthening plans activities based on assessment findings.
 - For example, MEL staff may desire mentoring and coaching in real-time behavior change monitoring.
 - Technical staff may request additional support on how to determine factors that prevent or support changes in priority behaviors.
 - Frontline workers (government agents, agriculture extensionists, volunteers, or others) may benefit from training and peer-to-peer learning on interpersonal communication and group facilitation skills as well as RFSA-specific approaches such as community feedback and accountability mechanisms.

Box 7: Examples of Identifying SBC Capacity Strengthening Needs

An RFSA used an SBC competency [assessment](#) to engage management and teams in a participatory process to identify existing SBC competencies of core staff and build a plan to strengthen and develop further skills.



Another RFSA used an [SBC competency list](#) as the foundation to strengthen capacities of community health workers (CHWs) and mentors. The team identified existing strengths and areas for growth to determine where capacity strengthening would have most value. After reviewing job descriptions, the team planned ways to assess relevant competencies in CHWs and mentors. The team developed an [assessment tool](#) and criteria to “meet” a competency. Results of the assessment enabled the team to develop an action plan to address the most important attitudes and skills among CHWs and mentors.

- Add capacity-strengthening needs and plans to the TOC. Be sure to factor in time and resources needed to support everyone identified.
- RFSA teams can utilize the *Make Me a Change Agent: An SBC Resource for WASH, Agriculture, and Livelihoods Activities* training when interpersonal communication skills need to be strengthened among staff and/or community-level frontline workers (Love and Weber 2020). The training is designed for community-level workers who work on agriculture, livelihoods, and WASH-related activities to improve facilitation, negotiation, and other core interpersonal effective communication competencies.
- Be ready to pivot. RFSA are implemented in contexts that can change suddenly due to all types of shocks and stresses. Plans for capacity-strengthening of local partners and local actors, including frontline workers, benefit from having alternatives ready. One project was not able to access communities due to a crisis, and shifted from a cascade training for frontline workers to supporting peer-to-peer learning through mentorship and peer learning circles. Another RFSA identified gaps in interpersonal communication and group facilitation skills, but did not have time to cascade training all of the types of frontline workers. Instead, staff integrated skill-building sessions into all contacts with the frontline workers, from technical training and orientation on materials, to monitoring. This low-dose, high frequency model was more realistic than a stand-alone training cascade.

Mid-refinement Resources for SBC Milestone 5

- [Social and Behavior Change Competency Assessment](#)
- [Defining Social and Behavior Change Competencies for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition: A List for Assessing, Developing, and Evaluating Staff Skills](#)
- [Community Health Worker Competency List for Nutrition Social and Behavior Change](#)
- [Make Me a Change Agent: An SBC Resource for WASH, Agriculture, and Livelihoods Activities](#)

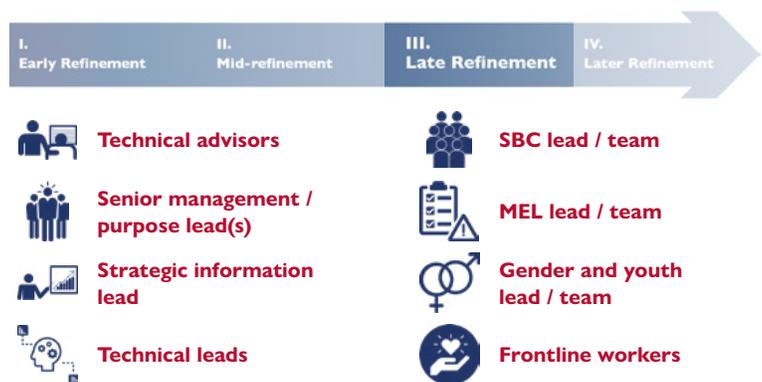


Credit: Feed The Future, Mboga na Matunda

III. Late Refinement

As you prepare for the Culmination Workshop, bring together and reflect on all the learning and experiences to date to prepare the plans for SBC. First confirm or refine priority behaviors based on research or practical experience. In other words, what specific actions are communities and families willing and able to do given their values and resources?

By the Culmination Workshop, partners will have drafted a behavior profile or analysis for each priority behavior based on learning from any research and community activities. Synthesize these analyses in a short summary or a first draft of the SBC strategy and submit with the Year 2 Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal. This summary will serve as a useful precursor to inform activities and MEL documents prior to the final SBC strategy.



Reflect these updates in MEL documents to monitor and report on specific pathways over the life of the award. Throughout the project, you will be incrementally refining what you prepared in earlier steps.

By the end of late refinement, one milestone will be completed:

6. Synthesize findings related to the SBC information gaps.

MILESTONE 6

Synthesize findings related to the SBC information gaps.

You may refine priority behaviors with findings from all types of start-up activities and research. Review priority behaviors to further refine or specify what is feasible.

Complete the analysis for each priority behavior. For each refined priority behavior, continue to compile findings from all studies and community experiences. A framework can be useful to organize the analysis. This [template](#) is an example, but partners can use any preferred format. Ideally, this analysis started during the early refinement to identify information gaps. Refine the final analysis based on the findings and experience.

After completing the analysis for each priority behavior, synthesize across all priority behaviors in a two-page summary. For example, look for similar factors, influences, and activities across the priority behaviors to identify common themes and focus areas. Although not considered a refinement period deliverable, with the Year 2 Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal submit the first draft of the SBC strategy, the summary of priority behaviors, or analysis of each behavior. If a partner has the strategy or summary earlier, they are welcome to share these with BHA earlier. Partners are encouraged to meet with BHA at any time in the process.

Why?

- Quality SBC depends upon understanding **what** specific groups of project participants are willing and able to try, **why**, and **who** needs to take action to address the factors that prevent or support behaviors. This information can come from many places (desk review, studies, gender analysis) and can be collected and organized in one framework for easier use. Use this information to select or refine activities to achieve social and behavior change.
- A behavior analysis offers a framework to understand and apply findings from studies, pilots, and community experience systematically.
- The synthesis of behavior analyses of all prioritized behaviors can guide activities to work toward social and behavior change until teams prepare a full strategy or plan. The synthesis can also include considerations for layering and sequencing at the needed time and intensity.

How to align with SBC best practice?

- Work with technical teams, local partners, and community representatives to prepare the analyses together, reflecting on the findings from the secondary data and all community engagement work, pilots, learning, and formative research.

- Use findings from the refinement period to make the priority behaviors more specific. Review the behaviors initially listed based on what would impact the goal specific to what communities are willing and able to do and how. The more specific the priority behaviors can be, the more likely projects can have impact and sustain the impact.
- Next, complete the analysis for each priority behavior. In the analysis, add new or refined factors that prevent or support practice of the behavior. If you have identified more than six to eight factors, based on your team's best judgment, prioritize or star the factors most strongly linked to the priority behaviors. Tip: Star [*] factors that prevent or support most participant groups in the program area to practice the behavior. From these, star those factors most feasible to change given your project's focus, resources, and partners.
- Consider sustainability when prioritizing factors. Which factors enable people to maintain behaviors, not only adopt behaviors, for example?
- Identify the people who need to take action to reduce barrier(s) or enhance support(s) for each starred factor. These people can be called influencers, and may be family members, community leaders, or market actors. Also consider any needs for people to be able to sustain change. Depending on the type of behavior, continued activity or service delivery, or capacity strengthening, may be required. Include those people whether management, service providers and/or skill providers.
- Select or refine activities based on how you plan to remove barriers or support enablers, often working with identified influencers. Consider activities from three levels:
 - **Enabling environment** refers to institutional or policy level activities that ensure directives and funding that strengthen structures and processes that deliver or manage programs, products, or services.
 - **Systems, products, and services are** organizational level activities that build or improve physical structure, introduce a new technology; expand or strengthen supply chains, or improve the quality of service delivery.
 - **Demand and use relate to** individual and interpersonal activities to generate commitment to inform, influence, motivate, mobilize, or teach skills to practice the behavior.
- When selecting activities, consider the needs for sustaining change again. Depending on the type of behavior, identify the needs for continued activity or service delivery and explicitly build this into the activity. This will help the project be ready for transition from direct to local service delivery.

Draw a pathway linking each element. Most factors will also link to supporting actors before linking with activities. Some factors may link to more than one supporting actor and actors will likely be able to influence more than one factor. A project may also contribute to more than one pathway.

- After completing the analysis, add or refine indicators for the behavior and key factors in the framework. If there were not already indicators identified at the prioritization phase, search for existing indicators to measure change in the behavior and key factors. New custom measures can be created if existing indicators are not available. During analysis, consider the main factors that drive each behavior. Project teams often assume that information or skills will be sufficient and therefore propose education and training activities. Usually, however, information or skills at the internal level are not enough for people to make changes. In most cases, people need an enabling environment and social support to adopt and sustain change. The value of synthesizing analysis of priority behaviors is that teams can identify the factors and influencers in common and plan for a cohesive approach that truly meets people's needs. For example, a project that aimed to improve the behavior, "Households use selective timber harvesting in forests," learned the reasons why youth and women were less likely to practice this behavior in their communities even if bylaws are in place. Youth explained that they do not feel included in the community so do not feel that they have to follow community agreements, and they care more about immediate benefits than long-term environmental concerns. Women shared these concerns, as well as the expectations they face from gender roles. The project finalized their behavioral analysis with this learning (shown in red font in the [Milestone 6 Example Behavior Analysis](#)).

For example, a project prioritized the behavior of, "households invest their income through village savings groups," and planned to form village savings groups and train groups on the curriculum. As the pilot started, staff learned that negative past experiences limited participation and perceptions that the groups are for small events rather than long-term savings limited the amount people saved. The project added these key factors related to social norms about group functioning and attitudes to the analysis. This meant that they could adjust the activities beyond training.

RFSAs often determine what strategic activities and platforms to use in the proposal period. Ideally activities are identified by analyzing what would be needed to achieve change; however, it is possible to use the learning to refine activities that can lead to improved behaviors. In completing the behavioral analysis, consider what planned activities need adjusting to address the factors and influencers identified for each behavior. For example, a team initially planned a household level agriculture training to achieve the behavioral outcome: households grow nutrient-rich foods. Research during the refinement period, including the gender and youth analysis, identified limitations in women and youth access to land as a key challenge to food production and equitable household allocation. With this learning, the activity of household-level agriculture training continued, but the training developed offered sessions for household dialogue on equitable land access to address gender and youth concerns during each session. The team also added two activities:

- Women's and youth access to land is integrated as a topic in community dialogues with support of leaders.
- Equitable distribution of land is included in community accountability and tracking mechanisms. This activity was designed to show women and youth the growing share of land allocated to them, and to hold leaders accountable for this increase.

Box 8: Refining Priority Behaviors with Communities

The refinement period gives partners an opportunity to identify priority behaviors that are localized and specific to the needs of segments or specific groups of program participants. Often partners start with behavioral outcomes in the TOC, rather than specific behaviors. Use learning from desk reviews, pilots, research, and community consultations by late refinement to make the behaviors more specific based on what communities find acceptable, desirable, and feasible. More specific behaviors often reflect what small, specific actions participants themselves are willing and able to do with their resources. This specificity enables the project to focus resources and have greater impact and sustainability.



For example, a project used the refinement period to test approaches to promote a priority behavior, “Caregivers continue to breastfeed and feed children during illness.” The project tested approaches with health workers and communities to learn what is feasible in the local context. Most caregivers were able to continue breastfeeding during illness by adding feeds at night. The team could make this behavioral outcome more specific: “Caregivers give extra breastfeeds to children during illness including at night.”

In another example, a team planned to establish peer groups for women expecting this to lead to a behavioral outcome: pregnant and lactating women eat a diverse diet daily, all year. During the refinement period, the desk review and pilot groups identified seasonality of food access as a key challenge. Based on these findings, the team added sessions on food preservation to the peer group curriculum so that women could have diverse food available all year.

Late Refinement Resources for SBC Milestone 6

- [Behavior Analysis \[Worksheet\]](#)
- [Monitoring Social and Behavior Change for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition](#)

MEL Plan

- SBC and M&E technical experts should collaborate to ensure that priority behaviors and factors are included in the monitoring section of the M&E plans (it would be useful to indicate these with symbols in the logframe). To do this, first search for existing indicators to measure factors and behavior such as in this [table](#). Only if those indicators are not available should new custom measures be created and tested.
- Contextualize the performance indicator reference sheet (PIRS) with these additions or adjustments to indicators, similar to how projects do this for environmental indicators). Explain in the PIRS how the project will use that data to reflect on each related priority behavior and monitor change.
- Add the refined behaviors and pathways to M&E documents. Update M&E documents to reflect refined behaviors and change pathways, if changes were made during Refinement.

Monitoring

- People and contexts change. Monitoring trends in behaviors and factors that drive behaviors is critical to making timely adjustments. Waiting until the end of the project may result in missed opportunities to have impact. Sometimes a new factor may arise.
- Based on the MEL plan, behavior and factor monitoring should occur alongside routine project monitoring. Select monitoring frequency and methods and prepare indicators to monitor shifts in priority behaviors, factors, and influencers. Include these indicators in the MEL plan along with the SBC strategy. USAID's [Monitoring Social and Behavior Change for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition](#) or the [guide to evaluating SBC and accompanying tools](#) may be helpful.
- Monitor for unintended consequences, especially for sensitive topics such as gender and social norms. Resistance to normative change might be resolved by listening and making project adjustments. This [guidance note on Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms](#) can help guide the process of monitoring norms.

SBC Strategy

- Include a section on indicators and monitoring methods, developed with the M&E lead and team.

Role of MEL and Technical Teams

- MEL and technical teams need to maintain focus on their progress to achieve the priority behaviors. It takes everyone to participate. Include priority behaviors in reporting documents, for example. Adding a column to the logframe and the annual work plan with the priority behavior(s) can remind teams to ensure that activities stay focused on the intended outcomes.



Credit: Morgana Winfield, USAID

IV. Later Refinement

After the Culmination Workshop, while preparing for the Year 2 PREP, use the analyses and synthesis of priority behaviors to prepare the SBC strategy. Incorporate the indicators for change pathways into the M&E plan and logframe, if not already reflected, to monitor trends in behaviors and factors that drive behaviors to make timely adjustments. This is also a time to continue to address SBC capacity-strengthening needs identified through the assessment during mid-refinement.



Senior management /
purpose lead(s)



SBC lead / team



MEL lead / team

By the end of later refinement, one final milestone will be completed:

7. Submit the first draft of the SBC strategy.

MILESTONE 7

Submit the first draft of the SBC strategy.

Prepare a first draft of the SBC strategy after the Culmination Workshop with local partners and stakeholders, the community, and RFSA leadership, as an annex to the Year 2 PREP. The SBC strategy brings together SBC efforts for each sector across the project, grounded in the TOC and tailored to the local context. It shows the change pathways for priority behaviors and offers considerations for the type, timing, and intensity of activities, and thus creates a road map for staff and partners. BHA expects the SBC strategy to be a living document that will influence changes in project activities, including the TOC, work plan, monitoring and evaluation plan, and budget. It also helps to operationalize the gender analysis and action plan along with other project plans. Note that submitting the strategy does not mean activities to improve social and behavior change have to wait for this strategy, as some may start during the refinement period through pilots or implementation research.

Why?

- A comprehensive SBC strategy includes different types of activities to facilitate change such as supply inputs, financing, policies and by-laws, and service improvements in addition to community engagement and communication. This enables a coordinated approach across sectors or purposes to ensure activities are aligning supply, demand, and the enabling environment.

How to align with SBC best practice?

- Co-create the SBC strategy with technical team leads, local partners and stakeholders, the community, and RFSA leadership. Doing this will help everyone on the team own the SBC strategy and use it over the life of the project.
- Align the strategy with the project's TOC.
- Show how each priority behavior and key factor will be monitored and evaluated. Include a section on the indicators associated with each priority behavior and key factor, and link this back to the logframe and TOC. Also describe and identify how the proposed activities (e.g., training, quality improvement) contribute to which indicators in the M&E plan.
- The strategy should not create many, if any, stand-alone activities. Rather, most of the strategy and activities will be about how to implement planned activities so as to engage those who need to take action to address the main drivers of social and behavior change.
- The strategy will identify gender and age considerations and describe links to the gender analysis and action plan. It will explicitly address factors critical to achieving the outcomes identified during refinement. This is important for activities planned from the start or new activities added.

- For example, a project may have planned to promote women’s dietary diversity through peer groups, such as care groups and village savings and loan groups. During refinement, the teams note three factors that prevent or support women to eat diverse foods and ways to address these factors. 1) People place low value on locally available, wild foods (barrier). The activity should focus on elevating the value of wild foods instead of explaining women’s nutrient needs. 2) Nutritious foods may not be affordable during the lean season (barrier). Add food preservation activities and social entrepreneurship to sell the preserved foods in the community. 3) Families are willing to give special care to women during pregnancy and lactation (facilitator). Add community activities to engage families around helping women to eat a more diverse diet, based on the cultural value.
- The strategy will combine elements common across multiple behavior analyses such as priority and influencing groups; SBC objectives, barriers, and enabling factors; and a well-defined mix of activities.
- In the strategy, show which activities will contribute to which indicators in the MEL plan, or link to the TOC and MEL plans.
- Consider the needs of communities, or sub-groups within communities or participant groups, to layer activities and/or topic areas. The SBC strategy is a useful way to plan for layering of different sectoral activities to the same groups at the same time.
- The SBC strategy can also plan to sequence activities and/or topic areas thoughtfully. Sequencing avoids overloading staff, partners, and communities with too much at once. In some cases, sequencing could be phased, to expand implementation coverage or add topics and complexity. In other cases, sequencing is a matter of determining which topics to begin with in a group or training, for example. To sequence, it can be helpful to ask which activities or topic areas are dependent upon others.
- Carefully think through sustainability considerations in the SBC strategy. This is an opportunity to pull together insights from the behavior analysis on steps to maintaining change, the influencers or supporting actors who need to act, and the factors that drive practice and maintenance of the behavior to lead to sustained outcomes. It may be helpful to propose some benchmarks to community commitment, ownership, and adoption over the first few years to be sure that activities are on track for transitioning to local service delivery, and any needed adaptation is timely.

RFSAs can select the type and length of strategy that is most useful to serve as their roadmap for SBC. One project developed a longer strategy and several shorter versions. A 10-page version is used by management and local partners, and a shorter two-page version is helpful for communities and frontline workers.

Be ready to pivot: RFSAs are implemented in contexts that can change suddenly due to all types of shocks and stresses that can affect access to communities and community needs. One project grappled with restrictions on gatherings in communities due to security concerns; the project worked with community leaders to shorten community dialogues by half and have small groups. Another project adapted by switching from in-person community dialogues to dialogues on community radio, so that only leaders and change agents traveled to the radio station, or called in.

Address additional SBC capacity-strengthening needs.

SBC capacity among staff, government partners, and volunteers is important to achieving and sustaining improvements in behaviors and social norms. Address capacity-strengthening needs through a combination of activities that include training, coaching, mentoring, and peer-to-peer learning comprehensively. Include descriptions in the DIP and annual work plans.

Why?

- Investing in SBC capacity-strengthening can improve the quality of SBC implementation, where knowledge, attitudes, and skills are gaps. It will also strengthen efforts to sustain gains in social and behavior change because projects need to continually adapt to peoples' needs. This is true for staff and government partners who train, supervise, or support community level workers and volunteers.

How to align with SBC best practice?

- Use a variety of approaches in addition to training to strengthen capacity, such as—
 - continual coaching and mentoring
 - peer-to-peer learning, through reflections, pairing
 - performance improvement.
- Add these approaches to the DIP and budget to ensure that resources are allocated.
- Projects may utilize SBC trainings such as *Make Me A Change Agent: An SBC Resource for WASH, Agriculture, and Livelihoods Activities* (Love and Weber 2020). The SBC competency assessment can guide which modules would be most useful for which cadres.
- Follow up any training with intensive interactive, supervised practice in community settings.

Later Refinement Resources for SBC Milestone 7

- [Using Research to Design a Social and Behavior Change Strategy for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition](#)
- [Nutrition SBC Strategy Checklist](#)
- [Make Me a Change Agent: An SBC Resource for WASH, Agriculture, and Livelihoods Activities](#)

Annex 1. Additional Resources

Background Resources

- BHA Refine and Implement Overview and FAQ, <https://www.usaid.gov/document/refine-and-implement-overview-faq>
- Learning from Evaluations: A Review of 16 Mid-Term Evaluations of USAID-funded Food Security Development, https://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/MTE%20Review%20Report_FINAL.pdf
- Report on a Review of Social and Behavior Change Methods and Approaches within Food for Peace Development Food Security Activities, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00THNP.pdf

I. Early Refinement Resources

- [Behavior Analysis \[Worksheet\]](#)
- Examples of Behavior Profiles for Multiple Sectors, [Think | BIG \(thinkbigonline.org\)](http://thinkbigonline.org)
- Factors That Influence Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Behaviors, <https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/factors-influence-multi-sectoral-nutrition-behaviors>
- Formative Research Technical Note (forthcoming)
- Illustrative Behaviors to Improve Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture https://www.advancingnutrition.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/tagged_py5_deliverable_1.3.b.2_user-tested_nsa_behaviors_list.pdf
- [Information Gaps SBC Considerations \[Worksheet\]](#)
- [Prioritizing Behaviors Worksheet \[draft for BHA review\]](#)
- SBC Formative Research Decision Tree, <https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/sbc-formative-research-decision-tree>

II. Mid-Refinement Resources

- Community Health Worker Competency List for Nutrition Social and Behavior Change, <https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/community-health-worker-competency-list-nutrition-social-and-behavior-change>
- Defining Social and Behavior Change Competencies for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition: A List for Assessing, Developing, and Evaluating Staff Skills, <https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/defining-social-and-behavior-change-competencies-multi-sectoral-nutrition-list-assessing>
- Formative Research Technical Note (forthcoming)
- Social and Behavior Change Competency Assessment: Tool for Resilience Food Security Activities, https://www.advancingnutrition.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/sbc_competency_assessment_tool_for_rfsas.pdf

III. Late Refinement Resources

- [Behavior Analysis \[Worksheet\]](#)
- [Measuring Social and Behavior Change: A Guide for Evaluators, https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/measuring-social-and-behavior-change-nutrition-programs-guide-evaluators](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/measuring-social-and-behavior-change-nutrition-programs-guide-evaluators)
- [Monitoring Social and Behavior Change, https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/monitoring-social-and-behavior-change](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/monitoring-social-and-behavior-change)

IV. Later Refinement Resources

- [Make Me a Change Agent: An SBC Resource for WASH, Agriculture, and Livelihoods Activities, https://www.fsnnetwork.org/mmca](https://www.fsnnetwork.org/mmca)
- [Nutrition SBC Strategy Checklist, http://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/nutrition-sbc-strategy-checklist](http://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/nutrition-sbc-strategy-checklist)
- [Using Research to Design a Social and Behavior Change Strategy for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition, https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/using-research-design-social-and-behavior-change-strategy-multi-sectoral-nutrition](https://www.advancingnutrition.org/resources/using-research-design-social-and-behavior-change-strategy-multi-sectoral-nutrition)

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