

Increasing Transparency & Accountability on nutrition

A technical proposal to amend CRS purpose codes in the nutrition sector and establish a new marker for nutrition will be submitted to DAC members at the next WP STAT (Working Party on Development Finance Statistics) meeting from Feb 28 to March 2. This note summarizes the proposed changes.

I. Background

The existing Creditor Reporting System (CRS) provides an inaccurate picture of nutrition funding, **leading to under-estimations in donor ODA to nutrition.**

- The basic nutrition code is not well aligned with the scientific definition of nutrition specific interventions. According to the [R4D last policy brief](#), “43% of the basic nutrition code does not align with the Lancet’s definition of nutrition-specific interventions.” and the current structure of the CRS misses “key sources of nutrition specific funding in other purpose codes: \$487 million in nutrition-specific funding can be found in 15 other purpose codes.”
- **Despite the fact that the bulk of current financial commitments to nutrition are “nutrition-sensitive”,** there is currently no systematic way to track nutrition sensitive investments **with the existing CRS database.** According to the [R4D last policy brief](#), “over \$3.8 billion of likely nutrition sensitive investments across 35 purpose codes are not marked in any systematic way.”¹
 - ➔ **This review process will bring greater transparency and uniformity to the tracking of donor investments for nutrition.**

II. Minor Adjustments to the basic nutrition code, 12240

The proposed coverage note for the new basic nutrition code is: *“Provision of iron-folic acid, calcium, multiple micronutrient and balanced energy protein supplementation to pregnant and lactating women; provision of vitamin A, zinc, and multiple micronutrient supplementation to children; promotion of infant and young child feeding practices including exclusive breastfeeding; provision of complementary feeding to target groups; non-emergency management of acute malnutrition and other targeted feeding programs; staple food fortification including salt iodization; monitoring of nutritional status; policy development, monitoring & evaluation, capacity-building, and research in support of the science and implementation of aforementioned interventions.”*

The most significant changes to the current basic nutrition code include:

- ❖ **Alignment with *The Lancet* defined nutrition-specific interventions and WHO guidance.**
- ❖ **Exclusion of school feeding activities** (to be transferred to a new code 112xx under basic education) **and household food security programs** (to be transferred to a new code 520xx under developmental food aid/food security assistance)
- ❖ **Inclusion of investments in policy development, capacity-building, research and implementation science for nutrition-specific initiatives.**

¹ Several donors report according to the “SUN donor methodology”, but this reporting is neither applied universally nor consistently. Today, the only reliable source to track nutrition funding is the global nutrition report. However, only SUN donors report their own nutrition funding, and there is no formal obligation for them to report to the GNR.

III. Introduction of a nutrition policy marker

If the marker is introduced, donors will be required to identify their nutrition-specific and -sensitive projects and report the scores to the OECD. Activities where nutrition is a principal objective of the project would be categorized as a “2”. These activities will include:

- All activities coded under basic nutrition code
- Most nutrition-specific activities coded under other nutrition-relevant codes²

Activities where nutrition is a significant objective of the project would be categorized as a “1”.

- Most nutrition-sensitive activities would be captured here, since nutrition is usually not the principal objective of nutrition-sensitive activities.
- Additionally, some nutrition-specific activities may also be captured here, where nutrition is only one small component of a larger project.

All other activities (not related to nutrition) would receive a “0”.

I. Better track nutrition-specific investments

Under the current definition of the basic nutrition code, the R4D analysis of 15 purpose codes in the health and emergency response sectors found that in 2014, “**half of all nutrition-specific investments were captured under purpose codes outside of the basic nutrition code**” (page 11)³

- **Application of a nutrition policy marker would provide a way to track these nutrition-specific investments that are captured outside of the basic nutrition code.**

II. Produce an accurate and reliable accounting of nutrition-sensitive investments.

Knowing that 100% of nutrition-sensitive interventions are multi-sectoral, this option would be useful to give each sector credit for both nutrition-specific and -sensitive programs. Having the policy marker would make the Sun Donor Network (SDN) method easier and less time consuming by being able to filter through pre-coded investments. The project-by-project analysis could then be on the coded investments for validation.

- **Introducing a new policy marker for nutrition is the only systematic and consistent way to track nutrition funding. This could provide a way for donors to start reporting nutrition-sensitive investments by sector.**

IV. A unique opportunity to increase transparency & accountability on nutrition

At the next 2017 WP-stat meeting, DAC donors have the opportunity to dramatically reform the transparency and accountability of their nutrition commitments, thereby increasing confidence that commitments are being kept and that member states are making progress towards achieving World Health Assembly global nutrition targets and SDG2.

² Because these nutrition-specific activities may be part of broader RMNCH packages or emergency response projects, they may be excluded from the basic nutrition code but would be captured under the nutrition marker.

³ Even if the basic nutrition code is revised to the proposed definition, these nutrition-specific investments in other health and emergency response sectors are unlikely to be reallocated to the basic nutrition code³ since it would “result in an artificial drop in funding for the other primary codes (i.e., health and emergency response).”