



Tracking aid for the WHA nutrition targets: Global spending in 2015 & a roadmap to better data

April 2018

The World Health Assembly (WHA) set global nutrition targets to be achieved by 2025, however, the world is off-track to meet the targets for stunting, wasting, anemia, overweight, and exclusive breastfeeding.ⁱ It is not clear whether countries and donors together will mobilize the additional resources needed to meet the targets, or to what extent contributions from broader health financing mechanisms will help fill the gap. Resource tracking for nutrition can help fill this information gap.

Data on spending for each WHA target is critical to determine what more is needed, strengthen strategic investment plans, and support coordinated resource mobilization efforts—and with this information, the Scaling Up Nutrition Donor Network (SDN) as a collective is better equipped to enhance nutrition programming and planning. However, data gaps limit the nutrition community’s ability to track disbursements by target and put the data to use. Most importantly, the current SDN methods do not have a way to track target level spending in a way that is both comparable across donors and straightforward enough to be completed annually.

To address these data needs, R4D developed a method to estimate the amount of donor disbursements to nutrition-specific interventions in 2015 in support of the WHA nutrition targets. All data was compiled from the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and analyzed to identify nutrition-specific interventions within the Global Investment Framework, which costed the WHA targets.ⁱⁱ This policy brief presents a snapshot of donor spending in 2015 and recommendations for how SDN members and other partners might improve resource tracking systems and data for enhanced strategic decision making. Please refer to the full technical report for more information on the methods and findings.

THE VALUE OF RESOURCE TRACKING

Donors can use resource tracking data to enhance investments in global nutrition by:

- » Monitoring flows across all donors to identify when flows are insufficient and respond in a coordinated fashion
- » Monitoring allocative efficiency of nutrition aid to ensure high-burden countries receive aid commensurate with their need
- » Responding with targeted and coordinated strategies

RESOURCE TRACKING RECOMMENDATIONS

To generate better data for strategic decision-making, planning, and coordination, R4D recommends that the SDN:

1. Improve project level data reported to the CRS
2. Continue to discuss and support improvements to how the CRS tracks nutrition
3. Develop a multi-stakeholder routine resource tracking guideline to refresh the SDN method

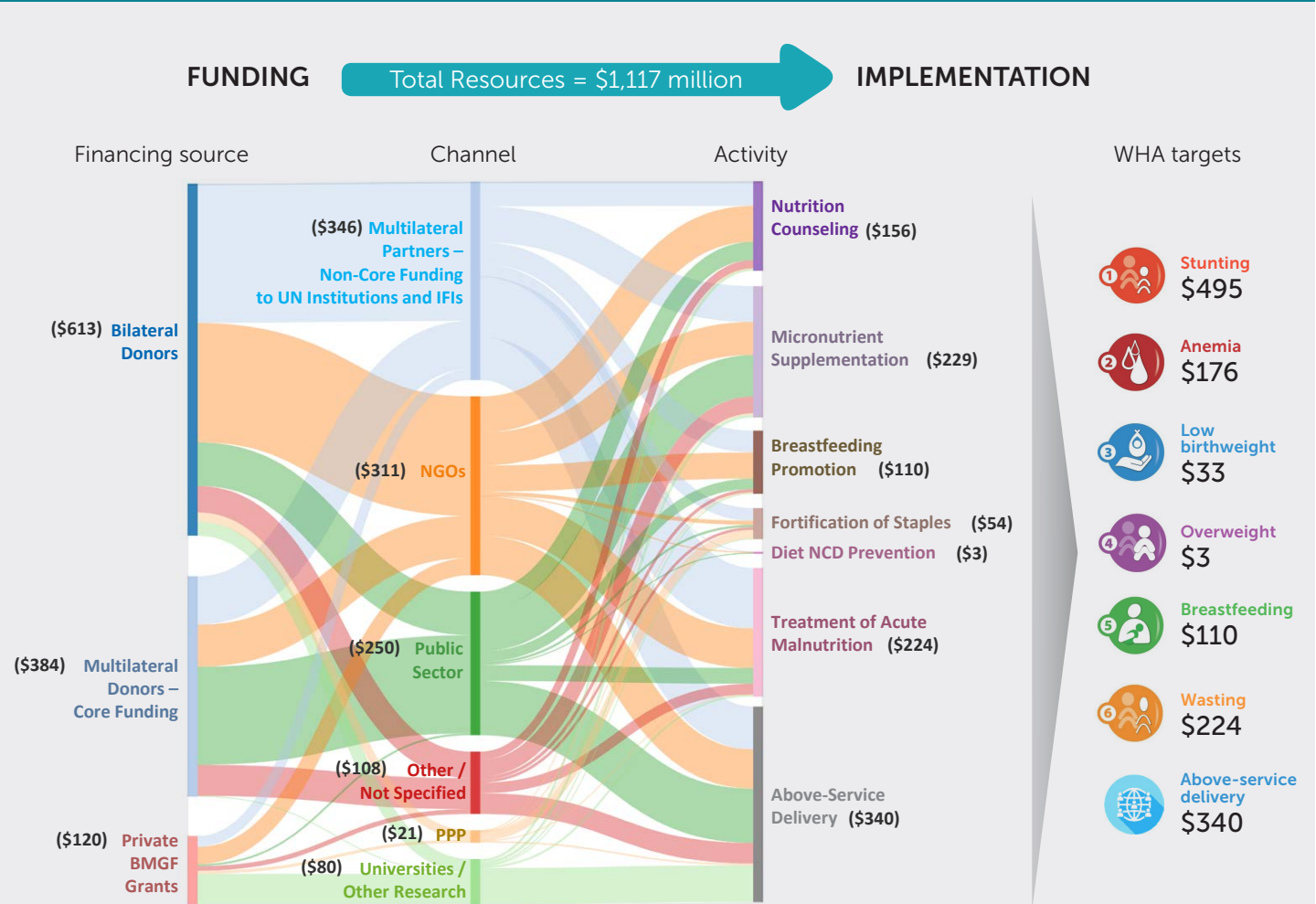
MAIN FINDINGS

NUTRITION-SPECIFIC DONOR DISBURSEMENTS IN 2015

In 2015, donors spent \$1.117 billion on nutrition-specific actions towards the WHA nutrition targets. FIGURE 1 shows the overall global funding flows for nutrition (excluding nutrition-sensitive funding) in 2015, illustrating disbursements by donor, channeled through partner, distributed to the nutrition interventions implemented, and finally rolled up to the six WHA targets. The stunting and wasting targets received the highest level of funding,

at \$495 million and \$224 million respectively, followed by anemia (\$176 million), breastfeeding (\$110 million), low birthweight (\$33 million), and overweight (\$3 million). An additional \$340 million was disbursed to stand-alone above-service delivery investments.ⁱⁱⁱ This summary presents a picture of funding flows that has not been comprehensively mapped before for nutrition.

FIGURE 1 Funding channel map illustrating 2015 disbursement flows from the donor source channeled through partners and to the activity implemented (USD, millions)



Color corresponds to the channel through which funding flows; thickness of the lines is proportional to WHA-aligned disbursements in 2015. Total WHA-aligned disbursements in 2015 were \$1,117 million. At the time of analysis, BMGF was the only private donor reporting to the CRS. European Union (EU) Institutions and the World Bank are defined as multilateral donors by the CRS. When Above-service delivery includes: coordination, governance & advocacy for nutrition, capacity building for nutrition, and research & data. BMGF=Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; IFIs=international financial institutions; NGOs=non-governmental organizations; PPPs= public-private partnerships; NCD=non-communicable diseases

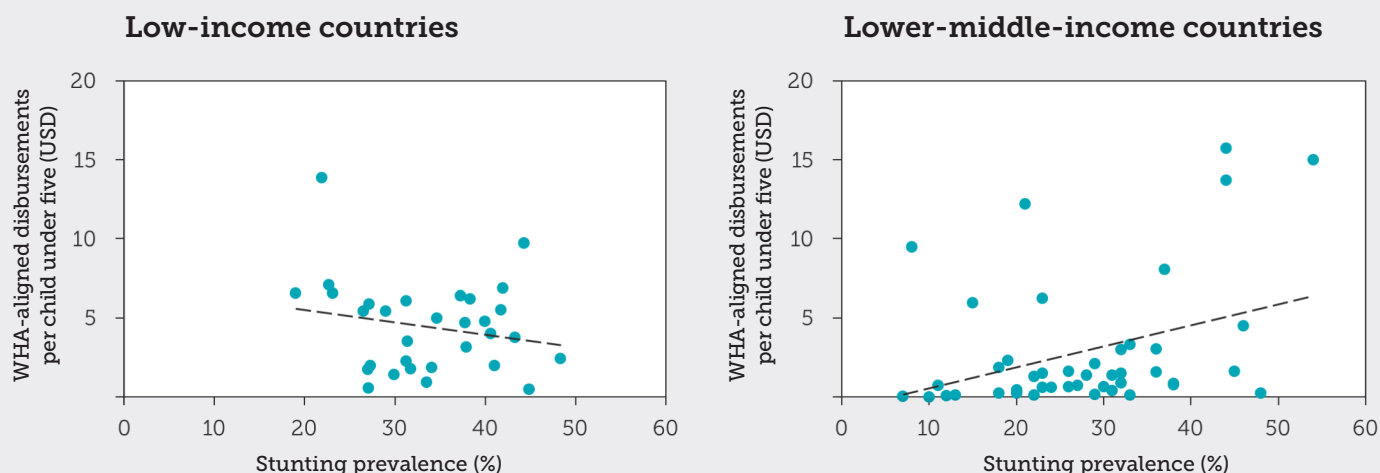
On average, the world needs to invest an additional \$7 billion annually to achieve the WHA targets.

While donors have contributed a substantial amount to nutrition, significant increases are still required to reach the WHA targets. Based on the findings of the Global Investment Framework for Nutrition^{iv} and our analysis of 2015 data, every one of the interventions shown in FIGURE 1 requires additional financing to be scaled up enough to achieve the WHA targets. In total, scaling up these high-impact nutrition-specific interventions to the coverage needed to reach the targets will require all sources (including governments and donors) to invest an additional \$7 billion annually. In this scenario, donors would need to contribute an additional \$3 billion annually towards the total resource need, on top of the \$1.12 billion reported here. This means that **donors will need to collectively monitor flows so that, in partnership with domestic governments, donors increase spending on nutrition to help close the nutrition resource gap.**

There is room for enhanced targeting to make each dollar spent on nutrition-specific investments more effective.

Because the nutrition resource gap is so high, every dollar of current spending counts—making it essential that donors direct aid to the neediest areas and the highest impact interventions. However, to date there has been limited data available on relative nutrition investments by recipient country and intervention. This analysis did not find a clear positive link between a country's malnutrition burden and the amount of aid per child towards the WHA targets it received (FIGURE 2), when looking at both stunting and wasting (wasting not pictured). This raises the possibility that nutrition aid could be more purposefully targeted to burden in the future than it is today. Through routine analysis of the data, **the SDN as a collective can monitor whether recipient countries are receiving aid commensurate with their need.**

FIGURE 2 WHA-aligned disbursements targeted against stunting burden across countries



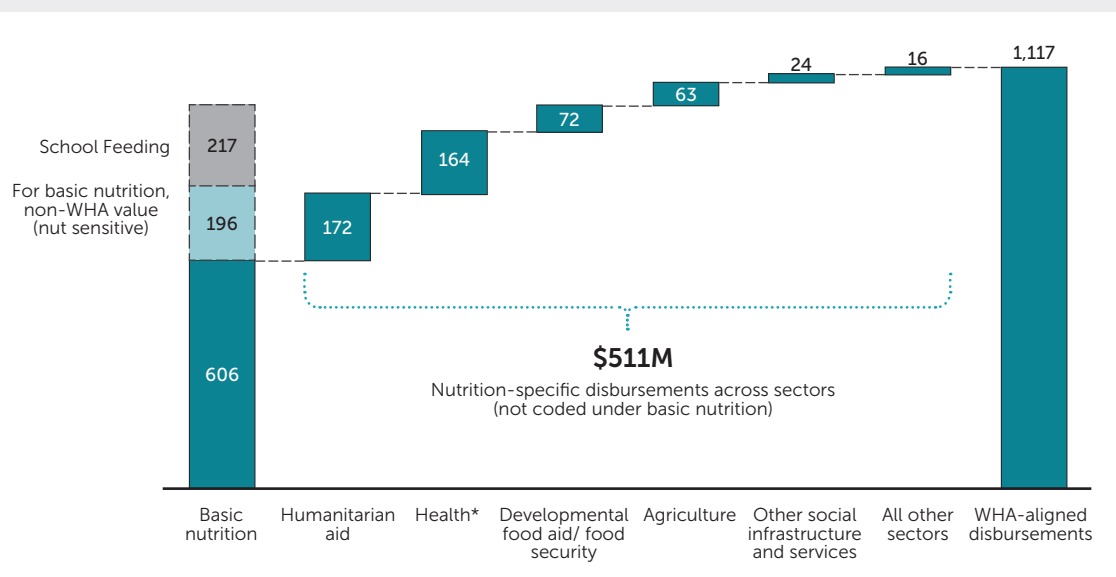
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED RESOURCE TRACKING

While nutrition resource tracking has progressed in the last decade, key data gaps remain.

The most common way to track nutrition-specific donor disbursements in the CRS is to use the purpose code for basic nutrition. However, this comes with limitations. First, the basic nutrition code definition has up until January 2018 included interventions outside those identified in the Global Investment Framework for Nutrition as high-impact nutrition-specific interventions, such as school feeding. As shown in FIGURE 3, in 2015 about \$413 million did not align with the WHA target intervention package. Changes to the basic nutrition purpose code will help address this issue: thanks to efforts by the SDN, the OECD approved changes to basic nutrition in July 2017 by excluding school feeding and household food security from its definition. It will be critical to inform the nutrition community about this change to prevent misinterpretation of a potential 21% artificial drop in basic nutrition disbursements because of the removal of school feeding (FIGURE 3).

Second, the basic nutrition purpose code includes mainly stand-alone nutrition programs and often does not capture nutrition investments that are integrated into broader programs (e.g., maternal child health programs that include supplementation; or agricultural programs that include fortification). In fact, FIGURE 3 shows that significant investments to the WHA nutrition targets in 2015 fall beyond the basic nutrition code—totaling an estimated \$511 million (46% of the total amount counted toward the WHA nutrition targets). **This means a substantial amount of funding is currently excluded from nutrition-specific global tracking efforts.** For nutrition-specific investments outside of basic nutrition, the solution may not be related to donor coding (some donors have the technical capacity to split disbursement values by purpose code, enabling a way to track these investments, while others do not). Rather, the solution lies with being able to identify these investments that are spread across purpose codes. Recognizing this issue, as well as the gap in nutrition-sensitive data, the SDN and other partners are working together on a proposal to the OECD to introduce a nutrition policy marker in the CRS to comprehensively track multi-sectoral investments in nutrition.

FIGURE 3 Disbursements to the WHA nutrition targets across sectors and purpose codes in 2015 (USD, millions)



Note: Health includes transactions in the nutrition dataset from 120 and 130 DAC codes, excluding basic nutrition purpose code 12240. Humanitarian aid includes 700 DAC codes; Developmental food aid and food security includes 520 DAC codes; Agriculture includes 310 DAC codes; Other social infrastructure and services includes 160 DAC codes; All other sectors include any other codes not listed above.

The method described here accounts for these data gaps to generate a closer estimate of nutrition-specific donor disbursements.

The method developed by R4D generated a data point that adjusted for these gaps to estimate “WHA-aligned” disbursements in 2015. When we compared this data point with total amounts to basic nutrition among the highest stunting burden countries, we were able to capture significantly more projects relevant to nutrition than otherwise. Future analyses on donor targeting by nutrition should consider the use of the WHA-aligned data point versus the use of basic nutrition disbursements.

Robust annual data on nutrition spending can support SDN strategic planning toward enhanced program investments.

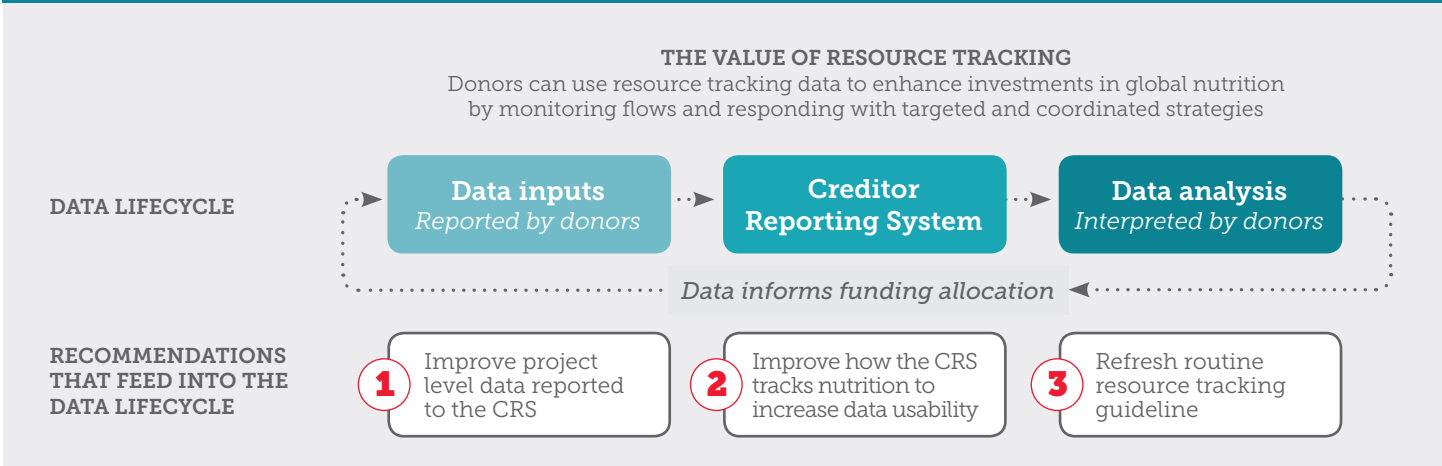
The following three recommendations are intended for the SDN and partners to work together towards improved resource tracking:

Recommendation 1: Improve project level data reported to the CRS. We encourage SDN members to pilot/mainstream best practices used by other members to improve project-level data reported to the CRS, thus enabling improved identification of transactions that include nutrition, as well as the nutrition interventions included in those transactions. Examples of such best practices include more detailed project descriptions that include relevant keywords and/or splitting program disbursements across multiple purpose codes, when technically possible in internal systems (e.g. the basic nutrition component of a project being coded as basic nutrition, with other components in other purpose codes).

Recommendation 2: Continue to discuss and support improvements to how the CRS tracks nutrition. We encourage the SDN to continue working to maximize the usability and policy relevance of publicly available CRS data. We support the SDN’s efforts to pursue adoption of a nutrition policy marker in the CRS to enable nutrition-specific and -sensitive projects to be identified beyond the basic nutrition code, as this will greatly enhance nutrition data availability.^v We encourage the SDN to discuss other possible innovations, such as the potential pros and cons of further disaggregating the basic nutrition purpose code in the long-term (e.g., at a simple level, to separate program and policy investments).

Recommendation 3: Develop a multi-stakeholder routine resource tracking guideline to refresh the SDN method. Since the SDN developed its guidance note on resource tracking in 2013, the field has made advancements. The SDN may now have several reasons to refresh its resource tracking methodology. First, this analysis presents a new, improved way to track nutrition-specific investments across purpose codes. Second, with a nutrition policy marker on the horizon, the time is ripe for the methods on nutrition-sensitive tracking to be updated. Finally, consultation with other stakeholders such as the UN Network or SUN Movement Secretariat can improve the way multilateral disbursements are tracked and can dramatically enhance data uptake by making data accessible to more data users. In the short term, the SDN should convene a meeting of stakeholders to discuss past learnings and potential steps for the future. This initial conversation would ideally lead to multi-stakeholder collaboration to develop updated resource tracking guidance and a streamlined routine resource tracking system.

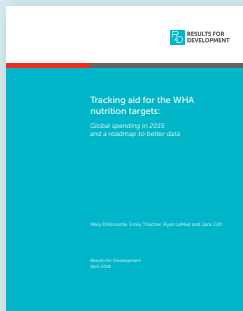
FIGURE 4 Recommendations to improve resource tracking through the Creditor Reporting System



NEXT STEPS

The nutrition community has made good progress on resource tracking since 2013, when the SDN first developed a guidance note to track development assistance for nutrition using CRS data. Momentum continues to move in a positive direction, and many SDN members have shown

interest in championing better nutrition resource tracking. R4D anticipates that the methodology used in the latest analysis will be applied to 2016 CRS data later this year and looks forward to further engagement with SDN members to enhance the usefulness and sustainability of the approach.



Tracking aid for the WHA nutrition targets: Global spending in 2015 & a roadmap to better data

Please refer to the full technical report for more information on the methods and findings.

» www.r4d.org/trackingWHAtargets

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

R4D wishes to thank all members of the SDN, UN Network, and SUN Movement Secretariat who contributed feedback throughout the analysis, especially Joyce Seto and Ariane Desmarais-Michaud from Global Affairs Canada and Abigail Perry and Nicola Wardrop from the United Kingdom Department for International Development for reviewing drafts of this policy brief. Funding was provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

FOOTNOTES

- ⁱ Development Initiatives, 2017. Global Nutrition Report 2017: Nourishing the SDGs. Bristol, UK: Development Initiatives.
- ⁱⁱ While this analysis only reports nutrition-specific disbursements, investments in the enabling environment and nutrition-sensitive activities are critical to achieve the WHA targets. The analysis did not capture nutrition-sensitive investments outside the basic nutrition purpose code for two methodological reasons. First, there isn't a clearly defined set of nutrition-sensitive activities that should be tracked. Second, without a policy marker for nutrition in the CRS database, it is not possible to comprehensively identify and track multi-sectoral investments that have nutrition goals, indicators, and activities (i.e., the SUN Donor Network definition of nutrition-sensitive). The CRS qualitative data (project title/descriptions) provide basic characteristics of the project and does not comprehensively include information on nutrition goals, indicators, and activities. Manual document review of all potentially relevant programs is not feasible as part of a routine process.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Above-service delivery (ASD) disbursements help support the scale-up of proven interventions and can include disbursements supporting coordination, governance, and advocacy for nutrition, capacity building, and/or research and data. In this analysis, only standalone ASD disbursements are reported in the ASD category. ASD disbursements as part of programmatic delivery, such as the monitoring and evaluation included within a program, have not been disaggregated from other programmatic disbursements to nutrition interventions.
- ^{iv} Shekar, Meera, Jakub Jan Kakietek, Julia M. Dayton, and Dylan David Walters. 2016. "An Investment Framework for Nutrition: Reaching the Global Targets for Stunting, Anemia, Breastfeeding and Wasting." 108645. The World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/758331475269503930/main-report>.
- ^v In Jan 2018, France presented a proposal to the OECD to introduce a policy marker for nutrition. This process has been supported by Action Against Hunger and R4D.