

# Introduction to the NIPN approach

The introduction sets out the approach that the **National Information Platforms for Nutrition (NIPN)** take, including their **structure**, the sub-steps in the **operational cycle**, the **core principles** and **scope**.

It also describes the **data-informed dialogue** between policy makers and data analysts that is at the heart of the NIPN approach.

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## 1.1 - NIPN approach

At country level, **the National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN)** is rooted within existing institutions and national multisectoral coordination systems for nutrition. From the analysis of available and shared data, it generates evidence that is used by (sub-)national stakeholders for developing policy, designing programmes and allocating investments. The **NIPN operational cycle** consists of three elements that constantly revolve and feed into each other:

- **Question formulation** based on government priorities;
- **Analysis of data** to inform the questions;
- **Communication of the findings** back to government.

The NIPN operational cycle is implemented by the **NIPN structure** made up of:

- Actors within a **policy component** which convenes and facilitates a multisectoral advisory committee, playing a key role in policy question formulation, interpretation of the results of data analysis and communication of findings.
- Actors within a **data component** that collates multisectoral data in a central repository and analyses the data.

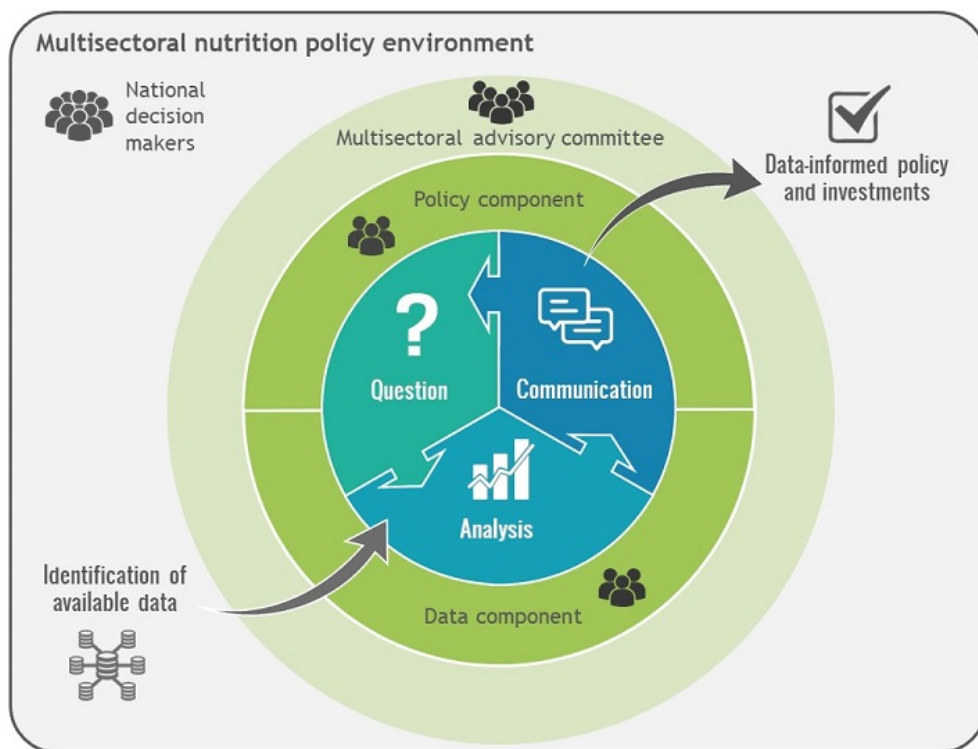
Both components are hosted by national organisations. The **NIPN country team**, comprising staff from the national host organisations, staff on contract and technical advisors, is embedded within these two components and is responsible for implementing the NIPN approach.

A **Multisectoral Advisory Committee** guides the country team, validates its work, and ensures information flows between NIPN and the national multisectoral mechanisms for nutrition.

The NIPN operational cycle can be split into sub-steps to facilitate implementation of the approach. These Guidance Notes serve to take the actors in the policy and data components through these sub-steps, which are not necessarily sequential and which require adaptation to each specific country context.

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NIPN approach



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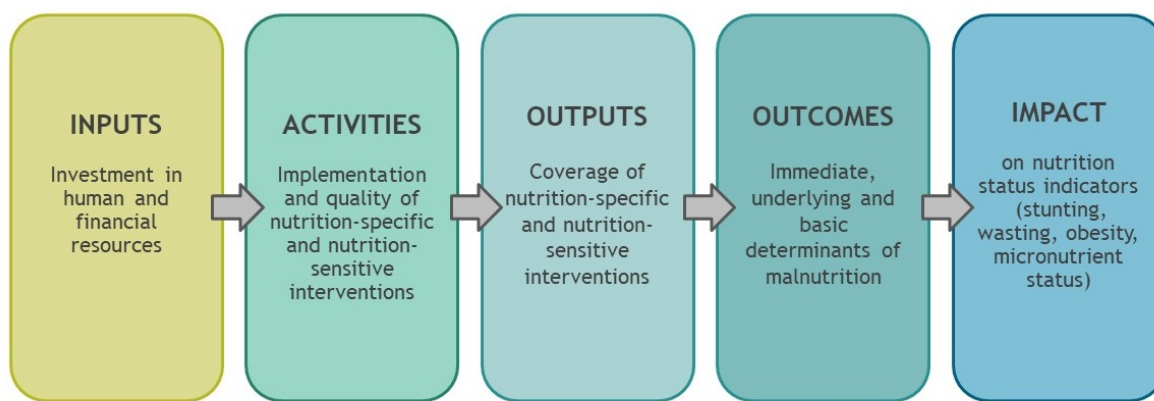
## 1.2 - NIPN core principles

Four core principles are embedded in the elements of the NIPN approach:

- **NIPN is country-owned.** It strengthens systemic, organisational and individual capacity and is rooted within existing national institutions and the existing multisectoral coordination system for nutrition.
- **NIPN is country-driven.** It is led by a country's priorities in relation to nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive policies and programmes.
- **NIPN uses existing data shared by multisectoral sources** for national and sub-national level analysis. As such, it improves the accessibility of nutrition-relevant data from multiple datasets and makes better use of under-utilised data. NIPN does not collect new data.
- **NIPN communicates clear and actionable messages in a timely manner to influence policy makers.** It tells a story that traces the impact pathway as illustrated in the visual below: how inputs (investments, human resources) are leading to outputs (intervention coverage) and translate into changes in outcomes (determinants of nutrition), which ultimately have an impact on indicators of nutrition status such as stunting.

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The nutrition impact pathway: a story to tell



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### 1.3 - NIPN dialogue

**Dialogue** is fundamental to the NIPN approach. The success of NIPN relies on dynamic interaction between sectors, departments or institutions that usually do not speak to each other, but are in this approach encouraged to exchange and discuss the meaning of data and statistics for nutrition-relevant decisions.

**Dialogue** between the policy actors, concerned with high-level policy and investment decisions related to nutrition, and the data actors, concerned with data management and analysis, is at the core of the NIPN operational cycle of Question-Analysis-Communication.

**Dialogue** between the NIPN country team and the broader national multisectoral nutrition coordination system, mainly through the Multisectoral Advisory Committee, ensures that the policy questions that are articulated, address key priorities, and that the findings of data analyses are communicated in a clear, actionable and timely fashion.

**The process of this dialogue should be continuous and dynamic**, hence the sub-steps of the NIPN operational cycle do not necessarily follow a prescribed sequence.

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### 1.4 - NIPN scope

**The National Information Platforms for Nutrition want to make better use of under-utilised national and sub-national data**; for instance to track progress and regional disparities in nutrition outcomes and determinants, in coverage of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions and programmes, as well as in investments in these programmes. Such analyses have a great value add to inform nutrition policy and investment decisions.

Though primarily driven by national and sub-national demand, the NIPN may not be in a position to answer all types of policy questions due to the lack of the right data of the right quality.

Broad questions may need to be broken down into more specific sub-questions that can be answered by NIPN, depending on data availability and quality.

Certain questions (e.g. regarding causality, impact or cost-effectiveness) may require new data collection in an appropriate study design or could be answered through review of the global

scientific literature. In both cases NIPN may refer the question to a nutrition partner such as a research institute.

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