



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# Capacity needs assessment tool

School-based food and nutrition  
education





# Capacity needs assessment tool

School-based food and nutrition  
education

Required citation:

FAO. 2021. *Capacity needs assessment tool – School-based food and nutrition education*. Rome.  
<https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7584en>

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO or the University in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FAO.

ISBN 978-92-5-135300-4

© FAO, 2021



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO licence (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo/legalcode>).

Under the terms of this licence, this work may be copied, redistributed and adapted for non-commercial purposes, provided that the work is appropriately cited. In any use of this work, there should be no suggestion that FAO endorses any specific organization, products or services. The use of the FAO logo is not permitted. If the work is adapted, then it must be licensed under the same or equivalent Creative Commons licence. If a translation of this work is created, it must include the following disclaimer along with the required citation: "This translation was not created by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). FAO is not responsible for the content or accuracy of this translation. The original [Language] edition shall be the authoritative edition."

Disputes arising under the licence that cannot be settled amicably will be resolved by mediation and arbitration as described in Article 8 of the licence except as otherwise provided herein. The applicable mediation rules will be the mediation rules of the World Intellectual Property Organization <http://www.wipo.int/amc/en/mediation/rules> and any arbitration will be conducted in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

**Third-party materials.** Users wishing to reuse material from this work that is attributed to a third party, such as tables, figures or images, are responsible for determining whether permission is needed for that reuse and for obtaining permission from the copyright holder. The risk of claims resulting from infringement of any third-party-owned component in the work rests solely with the user.

**Sales, rights and licensing.** FAO information products are available on the FAO website ([www.fao.org/publications](http://www.fao.org/publications)) and can be purchased through [publications-sales@fao.org](mailto:publications-sales@fao.org). Requests for commercial use should be submitted via: [www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request](http://www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request). Queries regarding rights and licensing should be submitted to: [copyright@fao.org](mailto:copyright@fao.org).

# CONTENTS

---

Acknowledgements.....	v
Abbreviations and acronyms .....	vi
Introduction .....	1
FAO’s role in school-based food and nutrition education.....	1
FAO’s school food and nutrition approach .....	2
Importance of assessing school-based food and nutrition education capacity needs.....	2
Objectives of the school-based food and nutrition education capacity needs assessment tool .....	3
Three levels of capacity needs assessment .....	4
Individuals .....	4
Organizations .....	4
Enabling environment.....	4
Part I. Carrying out a country school-based food and nutrition education capacity needs assessment	5
1. Convene a core team .....	6
2. Get buy-in.....	6
3. Prepare.....	6
Organization and planning.....	7
Background research .....	8
4. Conduct the capacity assessment consultation.....	10
5. Follow up.....	11
Using the results .....	11
Is it a learning issue? .....	12
Part II. Capacity needs assessment questionnaire.....	13
Enabling environment.....	13
Activity 1: National information systems relevant to school-based food and nutrition education .....	13
Activity 2: Policy and legal frameworks .....	14
Activity 3: Sources of funding for school-based food and nutrition education.....	16
Activity 4: Signs of political commitment .....	17
Organizational level .....	18

Activity 5: Roles, priorities and processes .....	18
Activity 6: Programme-related capacities.....	20
Activity 7: School system integration.....	22
Individual level .....	23
Activity 8: School-based food and nutrition education competences.....	23
Activity 9: Learning opportunities and training schemes .....	25
Activity 10: Comparison of funding estimates for school-based food and nutrition education ..	26
Prioritization and next steps .....	27
Activity 11: Prioritization.....	27
Activity 12: Next steps .....	28
Part III. Key considerations for the implementation of the tool.....	30
Planning .....	30
Adaptation and contextualization .....	30
Facilitation.....	31
Annexes.....	32
Annex 1. Model table: preliminary stakeholder identification.....	32
Annex 2. Proposed agenda for SFNE capacity needs assessment consultation .....	33
Annex 3. Model table: Broad picture of SFNE within the school system .....	35
Annex 4. Model table: follow up.....	37
Annex 5. Key considerations for conducting an SFNE learning needs assessment .....	38
Annex 6. Proposed professional competences related to SFNE.....	39

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

This capacity needs assessment tool forms part of a comprehensive package on school-based food and nutrition education (SFNE), as developed by a core team at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), including (in alphabetical order) Fatima Hachem, Yenory Hernández, Jane Sherman and Melissa Vargas.

The tool was developed by Melissa Vargas, with substantial technical inputs and revisions from Jane Sherman, Sally Bergman (FAO) and Yenory Hernández, under the technical leadership and guidance of Fatima Hachem.

We deeply appreciate the contributions of the 63 participants who provided feedback on the initial draft of the tool during a technical consultation on “Stepping up school-based food and nutrition education: Exploring challenges, finding solutions and building partnerships”, held in partnership with the United Arab Emirates University in 2017.

A piloting process carried out by Luisa López, with support from Israel Ríos and Jorge Ulises González and with technical guidance from Melissa Vargas and Yenory Hernández, was essential for the revision and adaptation of the final version of the tool.

Acknowledgements are extended to Andi Shiraz for editing and for ensuring compliance with FAO publishing standards.

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

---

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FNE	food and nutrition education
KAPP	knowledge, attitudes, practices and perceptions
LNA	learning needs assessment
NGO	non-governmental organization
PTA	parent–teacher association
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFNE	school-based food and nutrition education

# INTRODUCTION

---

Despite some progress, the world is not on track for meeting the global nutrition targets set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Due in part to poor diets, and impacted by the complex dynamics of modern food systems, malnutrition remains a growing problem. Nearly one in three people globally suffers from at least one form of malnutrition, and it affects every country in the world. International organizations, governments, researchers and donors are therefore looking to invest in and promote cost-effective and evidence-based strategies, policies and programmes to curb these trends. The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016–2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as critical frameworks for the strengthening and scale-up of coordinated efforts to prevent malnutrition in all its forms.

The capacity of people to engage in and practise food-related behaviours that support – rather than threaten – human and environmental health is intrinsic to these efforts. Food and nutrition education, in turn, has been reaffirmed as a crucial strategy for sustained improvements in people’s capacity to make their available resources work for healthier diets.

In this context, the school is a critical platform to advance the work and commitment to achieve nutrition gains. While outcomes may depend on the quality, duration, scope and sustainability of interventions, effective school-based food and nutrition education (SFNE) has been proven to favourably impact diet (particularly fruit and vegetable consumption), food-related capacities and outlooks, and the overall nutritional status of schoolchildren.

School-based food and nutrition education (SFNE) involves a set of coherent and progressive sequences of educational activities, with environmental supports. These are designed to help schoolchildren (along with school staff and parents) to achieve lasting improvements in their diets and other food practices, as well as in their outlooks and knowledge; to build their capacity to change and adapt to external change; and to pass on their learning to others.

To be effective, SFNE should therefore have a measurable long-term impact on outlooks and practices.

## FAO’s role in school-based food and nutrition education

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been a global leader in the field of SFNE for several decades, particularly with regard to supporting countries in the integration of food and nutrition education within their national school curricula, developing learning/training materials, and promoting the use of school gardens as learning platforms for nutrition.

Recently, the Organization has also adopted SFNE as an essential component of its corporate approach to school food and nutrition (see box on FAO's school food and nutrition approach).

### FAO's school food and nutrition approach

By the end of 2015, as a direct response to the international call for improved nutrition and food systems, FAO devised a corporate framework for action in school food and nutrition interventions and programmes, focusing on the most effective options and on the linkages between and within sectors that represent multi win situations.

This framework aims to: a) ensure that children in schools consume adequate, nutritious, diverse, acceptable, safe and enjoyable food for improved learning, b) foster healthy, lasting food-related practices and c) when possible, to favourably impact the local economy and food system in the process.

The FAO School Food and Nutrition Framework focuses on four areas, each with explicit linkages, points of entry and areas of technical support: a) promoting a healthy school food environment and school food; b) **integrating effective food and nutrition education throughout the school**; c) stimulating inclusive procurement and value chains; and d) creating an enabling political, legal and institutional environment.



Despite progress to date, the current state of global nutrition issues around the world still requires the significant scale-up of effective efforts to enhance the quality, impact and scope of SFNE. In this context, FAO is engaging with partners and international experts to improve the quality of associated methods, capacity development strategies and pathways to behaviour change, along with the scalability and sustainability of existing SFNE models, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries.

The foundation of this work is a set of outputs which include: a) a review of the available evidence as relevant to SFNE; b) a global survey on the current status of SFNE in low- and middle-income countries; c) a white paper showcasing key principles and good practices of SFNE; and d) a capacity needs assessment tool. Together, these outputs form a comprehensive package, which will be available to a range of stakeholders for developing coherent and effective SFNE strategies.

## Importance of assessing school-based food and nutrition education capacity needs

Fulfilling SFNE's potential and aims requires well-designed, cost-effective efforts that are implemented with fidelity and monitored with care. This in turn depends on the capacities of individual actors, institutions and organizations, as well as on an enabling environment.

Due to the nature of food and nutrition education and the emphasis it has received in recent years, specifically with regard to SFNE, capacities in this area are often found to be lacking or in need of strengthening. This is particularly the case in low- and middle-income countries; hence the need for capacity development.

It is crucial however, that capacity development is tailored to the given context, responds to the most important priorities and gaps, has buy-in from relevant stakeholders, makes use of available resources, and capitalizes on existing strengths. A good understanding and assessment of the context, and of capacity gaps and strengths at different levels, is therefore a recommended first step for achieving steady, progressive and feasible improvements in priority areas for capacity development.

FAO sees capacity assessment as a useful way to look inside a “country’s capacity system” and initiate a focused dialogue between resource partners and national and local actors about meaningful interventions for strengthening national capacities to drive development. It creates the basis for linking country capacity assets and needs to overall development goals<sup>1</sup>.

The present capacity needs assessment tool is therefore meant to be used by national and local groups as a foundation for the design of SFNE capacity development strategies. The tool responds to specific needs as evidenced by recent regional analyses, which have identified important gaps in SFNE capacities at different levels (i.e. national, regional, school and non-state). These capacity gaps commonly relate to a range of issues, including the following:

- lack of strong policy and legal frameworks for the support of SFNE;
- lack of funding and/or inconsistent funding for SFNE;
- inadequate coordination between entities involved in SFNE;
- failure to allocate enough school time to food and nutrition education to enact real change;
- SFNE initiatives that do not respond to the main dietary and nutrition issues among schoolchildren;
- SFNE approaches that do not effectively impact behaviours and outlooks;
- lack of family/community involvement;
- lack of quality learning materials;
- weak linkages to school food environments;
- weak linkages to school meal programmes;
- inadequate or non-existent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
- lack of qualifications and/or inadequate training among front-line educators;
- lack of training opportunities for influencers of change (e.g. food service staff, street vendors and school staff); and
- lack of published research on successful approaches, especially in the context of low- and middle-income countries.

## Objectives of the school-based food and nutrition education capacity needs assessment tool

The capacity needs assessment tool can be used by a consultative group to:

- provide an overall picture of the existing capacities, strengths and capacity gaps for developing and implementing successful SFNE strategies; and

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information on FAO’s capacity development approach, see: <http://www.fao.org/capacity-development/en/>

- provide a roadmap for designing effective, coordinated and feasible SFNE capacity development strategies.

## Three levels of capacity needs assessment

The tool builds on FAO's experience and expertise in capacity development, and adopts a broad approach that not only assesses capacities at the individual level, but also expands to the level of organizations and the enabling environment. The three levels are briefly described below.

### Individuals

At the individual level, capacity development strategies aim at changes in skills, behaviours and attitudes among priority groups of individuals. The capacity needs assessment is designed to identify individual capacity gaps so that training and development plans can be prepared to address them.

In the case of SFNE, gaps at the individual level have been observed in the design of programmes that go beyond information dissemination (for example, through the development of action-based curricula); in the know-how and practice of learning that is hands-on, evidence-based and strategic; and in monitoring and evaluation, among others.

Specific assessments of learning needs may be required to identify the tasks that are most relevant to given individuals or groups of individuals, the associated competences that are required, relevant training preferences and considerations for cost-effective approaches.

### Organizations

Strengthening organizational capacities involves taking measures to improve the overall functioning and performance of organizations, for example through changes in organizational mandates, systems, processes or priorities.

The process of identifying and mapping the institutions and organizations involved in school-based food and nutrition education and assessing their roles and functions can act as a bridge to: a) raising awareness on the need for effective SFNE; b) getting buy-in from different stakeholders; and c) determining whose capacity should be strengthened to support coherent and high-quality SFNE initiatives.

### Enabling environment

The enabling environment is the context in which individuals and organizations put their capabilities into action. It includes the institutional arrangement of a country, its implicit and explicit rules, its power structures, and the policy and legal environment in which individuals and organizations function.

Understanding contextual factors is particularly important, but commonly overlooked in SFNE, as there are so many dimensions and levels of action. Capacities may be strengthened at the individual level, for example for school teachers, but if no space is allocated for SFNE in the national curriculum, or if no policies are implemented to allow or encourage the teachers to apply their acquired skills and knowledge, this will result in missed opportunities and the loss of resources.

# PART I. CARRYING OUT A COUNTRY SCHOOL-BASED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

---

- **Why conduct a capacity needs assessment?**  
To have an overall picture of what is needed to improve SFNE in terms of capacity strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, and to have a roadmap for designing effective, coordinated and feasible SFNE capacity development strategies.
- **How should the assessment be conducted?**  
By following a simple process for participatory multistakeholder consultation (see Figure below), with key preparatory and follow-up activities.
- **Who should lead the process?**  
A core team made up of representatives from the main SFNE institutions in the country. Local or international consultants may also support the process, in close collaboration with national stakeholders.
- **How much time is needed?**  
About 4 months (1–2 months for preparatory activities + 3 days for consultation + 1 month for follow-up).
- **What are the expected results of the capacity needs assessment?**  
A set of priority SFNE capacity strengths and gaps, along with possible solutions to address these gaps at different levels (environmental, organizational and individual), identified through a participatory process and potentially agreed on.
- **What should the results be used for?**  
As the basis for designing cost-effective, feasible and coherent SFNE capacity development strategies, as well as for prioritizing capacity development needs and for advocating for investment in SFNE capacity development.

The tool is meant to be used with an array of stakeholders from different sectors, in order to identify key strengths, capacity gaps, and recommendations on how to address these gaps. These will then form the basis for effective, coordinated and feasible SFNE capacity development strategies. A significant part of the process consists of a 2–3 day participatory stakeholder consultation meeting, with appropriate preparatory and follow-up activities. Figure provides an overview of the recommended process for assessing SFNE capacity needs.

Figure 1. Recommended process for assessing SFNE capacity needs



## 1. Convene a core team

A core team of representatives from relevant sectors should be responsible for starting and carrying the process through. The main sectors for SFNE are usually education, health, social protection and agriculture. Non-governmental organizations may also play a key role in some contexts.

To facilitate regular communication and interaction, the core team should consist of no more than four members. It should be assigned a general terms of reference or a clear description of responsibilities for the capacity needs assessment process.

If the core team has limited time availability, an independent consultant with a strong understanding and background in SFNE may be hired for approximately 2–4 months, to conduct the preparatory activities in close consultation with the team and with national counterparts, and to participate in the needs assessment consultation. In case of limited resources, key academic partners may also support and contribute to the preparatory activities.

## 2. Get buy-in

Obtaining initial buy-in (for both resources and commitment) from the main governmental organization/institution coordinating SFNE at the national level is essential to start and support the process of capacity needs assessment, and to ensure that the results of the assessment inform capacity development investments. This may require a preliminary process of advocacy and awareness-raising on SFNE among decision makers.

Buy-in from all levels and sectors, as well as from top-level stakeholders, is of course key to eventually applying the results of the capacity needs assessment. The preparatory activities and the consultation itself should support stakeholder buy-in by generating interest and engagement.

## 3. Prepare

There are two kinds of preparatory activities required. These relate firstly to organization and secondly to background research, as described below.

## Organization and planning

In addition to the planning and organizational activities that are typically required in preparing for a consultation or workshop (for example, identifying a venue, arranging for participant travel, etc.), the following specific steps should be also be addressed:

### A. Identification of a facilitator

The results of a participatory capacity assessment depend greatly on transparent procedures and good facilitation skills, which together ensure that all participant voices are heard and that all opinions and inputs are taken into consideration. The person chosen for this task should have prior training in facilitation techniques and a good understanding of effective SFNE.

A local or international facilitator with adequate experience and expertise in SFNE may also be hired to assist with the capacity needs assessment process.

The capacity needs questionnaire provided as part of this tool (see Part II) includes basic instructions for the facilitator for each of the proposed activities.

For more information on facilitation techniques, see:  
<http://www.participatorymethods.org/task/facilitate>

### B. Identification of a rapporteur

A rapporteur is needed to record the results of the consultation and to assist with or undertake the reporting. The person selected should have good writing and summarizing skills, and a basic understanding of SFNE. Depending on the size of the consultation, participants may be called on to support the rapporteur.

### C. Identification of preliminary stakeholders

To ensure an inclusive and comprehensive process involving all the relevant levels (including national, local and school-level, as well as non-state actors), all possible SFNE stakeholders should be identified as a preliminary step before selecting and engaging those who will participate directly in the capacity assessment consultation. This can be done by the core team, which should have a fair understanding of the SFNE context and picture in the country.

The table in Annex 1 can be used as a model for identifying representative stakeholders (some examples for each level are provided). Stakeholders that are usually involved in SFNE include: ministry of education, ministry of health, ministry of social protection, teacher-training institutions, municipal/local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, academia, nutritionist associations, parent–teacher associations (PTAs), student organizations, civil society and the private sector.

**Output:** list of organizations/institutions involved in SFNE and of potential participants to invite to the consultation.

#### D. Adaptation: contextualization and relevance

While the present tool is designed to cover most aspects of relevance to SFNE capacity assessment, it cannot apply equally to all countries, due to differences in school systems, investments, policies, requirements, and so on. Its success therefore lies in adapting and tailoring the assessment activities and questions and the meeting agenda to the specific country context.

For this reason, the core team should review and revise the entire capacity needs assessment questionnaire and proposed agenda (see Part II and Annex 2 respectively), to detect areas, activities and questions that do not apply to the national situation, to contextualize those that do, and to eliminate or adapt any potentially sensitive activities.

Output: capacity needs assessment questionnaire and agenda tailored to the country context and situation.

### Background research

A certain amount of background research, including through the collection of documents and materials and through interviews with key informants, is required to ensure that stakeholders have the necessary information for a smooth assessment. Information across the following four areas or needs should be compiled, prepared and shared with participants before the consultation. (All four of the following research areas are referenced where necessary in the capacity needs assessment questionnaire in Part II.)

#### A. General understanding of the situation of schoolchildren, their behaviours and influencers

Prior to the consultation, it is essential to have a good overall picture of the socio-economic, health, education, food and nutrition situation of schoolchildren in the country, if possible with data disaggregated by region, sex and age. Areas that may be considered include: priority issues in malnutrition and food safety; consumption patterns; individual food consumption data (if available); knowledge, attitudes, practices and perceptions (KAPP) studies related to food and nutrition (if available); family care and food practices; broad food security and food system analyses; key education and performance issues; major health issues; health services (including structure and access); and national programmes that target schoolchildren and families.

The main information to gather may be guided by the following questions:

- What are the priority nutrition issues among schoolchildren?
- What are the main health issues affecting schoolchildren? How well are they covered by health services?
- What is the food security situation in the different regions? How does it affect schoolchildren?
- What are the consumption patterns of schoolchildren in the different regions? Is there any information on food-related knowledge, attitudes and practices? (For example, regarding the number of meals a day, breakfast, dietary diversity and snacks.)
- What are the main education issues among schoolchildren (for example, enrolment, retention and performance) according to region, gender and socio-economic status?

- Broadly, what are the main social protection, health, food and nutrition programmes that target schoolchildren?

The information should be compiled and summarized (ideally with facts and figures) into a brief presentation or overview, and made available to all those involved in the capacity assessment consultation.

For more detailed information on conducting an analysis of a given food and nutrition education situation, refer to Unit 6 of the FAO ENACT course: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4952e.pdf>

Output: brief visual overview or presentation summarizing the food, nutrition and education situation of schoolchildren, their behaviours and influencers.

## B. Shared understanding and exchange on SFNE vision and principles

It is essential to ensure a common vision of what quality SFNE means, and of the principles required and recommended to achieve it in practice. To this end, a review of the FAO publication “School-based food and nutrition education – A white paper on the current state, principles, challenges and recommendations for low- and middle-income countries” is highly recommended. Organized across a series of themes, the white paper presents the basic principles for quality SFNE, as identified and proposed by experts and practitioners in FAO and beyond, based on current evidence and extensive experience in low- and middle-income countries.

To access the white paper, see: <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb2064en>

A summarized version of the white paper should be circulated among participants before the consultation so they can each review a given theme and prepare to support or challenge the main principles. The themes and principles can then be discussed at the beginning of the capacity needs assessment consultation. (See also the proposed agenda in Annex 2.)

Output: brief digest or summary of FAO’s “School-based food and nutrition education – A white paper on the current state, principles, challenges and recommendations for low- and middle-income countries” to be circulated to the participants before the consultation.

## C. Broad picture of SFNE within the school system

A good picture of how food and nutrition education is integrated into the formal school system (which is one of the main strategies recommended for sustainable SFNE) can provide the basis for identifying capacity needs and strengths. It should cover the following questions:

- How is food and nutrition education integrated into the formal school system?
- Do all grades receive SFNE?
- On average, how many hours of SFNE per year do students receive?
- Who are the front-line educators?
- What are the main learning approaches used?
- What are the main topics addressed in the SFNE syllabus?
- Where does the bulk of SFNE take place?
- Are quality SFNE learning materials available and regularly used?

- Is there a regular assessment of SFNE progress and results? What type of results are assessed?
- What are the features of the school food environment?

A model table including the most important aspects to consider is presented in Annex 3.

Output: completed table reflecting a broad picture of SFNE within the school system.

#### D. Compilation of SFNE documents and materials

These should include:

- A list of the most important policies, laws and other normative instruments that relate to or mention SFNE (other terms normally used in these type of documents include nutrition promotion, social marketing, school health and nutrition education, behaviour change communication, promotion of healthy eating and learning about food and nutrition knowledge).
- A collection of expenditure reports and budgets related to SFNE, if any, and a preliminary list of the possible costs related to SFNE initiatives (for example, teacher training, learning materials production, food inputs, garden-related costs, etc.).
- Summary documents of any programmes that carry out food and nutrition education activities in schools (including school meal programmes, school garden projects, media campaigns in schools, programmes for extracurricular clubs for healthy eating, etc.).
- A list of all known training schemes where SFNE is integrated/included (for example through teacher training, online courses, project-based training and in-service training).

## 4. Conduct the capacity assessment consultation

A participatory approach is recommended for the consultation for three key reasons: to produce more valid results, to support a common vision for school-based food and nutrition education, and to engage participants on what needs to be done to get there. Hence it is important to seek direct inputs from participants rather than relying entirely on desk reviews or reports produced during preliminary activities.

A proposed agenda has been provided for the consultation (see Annex 2); this agenda corresponds to the structure and activities in the capacity needs assessment questionnaire as also provided (see Part II). Each section includes recommendations for the facilitator, along with basic directions on how to conduct the activities.

In preparing the agenda, it is advisable to revisit the changes made during the adaptation phase, in order to make any necessary modifications.

The suggested time allocation for the consultation is three days, but the total duration may vary according to the context, for example depending on how widespread SFNE is in the particular country, and on the number and affiliations of participants identified and invited.

## 5. Follow up

Having identified and agreed on the priority capacity gaps and possible strategies to address them, the next step is to design and support a capacity development strategy, programme or initiative that applies the results of the assessment.

To do this, buy-in and recommendations on next steps from the consultation participants must be supplemented by the dissemination of assessment results, advocacy and resource mobilization.

After the consultation, the core team can use the model table in Annex 4 to provide a summary and quick overview (in matrix form) of the results obtained.

The matrix can serve as a useful basis for a report or advocacy document, which can in turn provide justification for resource mobilization and required next steps. This report should be directed at the main government entity that coordinates SFNE in the country (with the involvement of relevant sectors and groups as previously identified). Alternatively, it can form the basis for seeking financial and technical support from an external donor or UN agency.

### Using the results

The results of the capacity needs assessment, as captured and discussed in the report of the consultation, should serve as the natural guide for the SFNE capacity development process to follow. Apart from training groups of individuals, there are many ways to design capacity development efforts to address identified gaps. Ideas for a range of such methods and modalities are presented below. It should be noted that priority capacity gaps in SFNE will normally require the use of more than one approach or modality.

Enabling environment	Policy dialogue, high-level advocacy, national/regional SFNE policy workshops, cooperation agreements, resource mobilization, donor support and international SFNE events.
Organizations	Organizational restructuring, creation of multistakeholder platforms, strategic planning support for SFNE programmes, review of school processes, setting up of informal networks and integration of SFNE training into national courses for educators.
Individuals	Training, training of trainers, in-service learning, knowledge exchange, study visits between schools or countries, job swaps, peer mentoring, professional incentives and participation in national seminars and conferences.



The design process should consider which combinations of capacity development activities are most appropriate, in order to effectively strengthen the capacity of state and non-state actors. The more time and effort goes into planning and designing, the more likely the project will be successful and sustainable.

For more information on designing, implementing and evaluating capacity development strategies, see: <http://www.fao.org/capacity-development/resources/practical-tools/design-capacity-development/en/>

### Is it a learning issue?

If the chosen priorities include addressing individual capacity gaps in priority target groups (such as school teachers, curriculum writers and NGO staff) through professional training and learning, then learning needs assessments (LNAs) will be required. An LNA analyses the specific learning needs of a given group of individuals, along with the context in which they operate. In this way, it identifies potential actions to maximize learning and recognizes the complementary efforts (including receptive institutional attitudes and structures) required to address gaps sustainably.

While a full discussion of LNAs for SFNE is beyond the scope of the present tool, a list of considerations related to their planning is provided in Annex 5.

For more information on how to conduct a learning needs assessment, see: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i2532e.pdf>

# PART II. CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## QUESTIONNAIRE

---

This questionnaire is meant to be used as a guide for the SFNE capacity needs assessment consultation (see Annex 2 for a proposed agenda). It is composed of four sections, each consisting of a series of activities (questions and tables) to be discussed and completed together with participants during the consultation. Each activity is introduced with an explanation of its main purpose, notes on the information needed for its successful completion, general directions on steps and proposed recommendations for the consultation facilitator.

### Enabling environment

#### Activity 1: National information systems relevant to school-based food and nutrition education

(40 minutes)

Quality data that reflect the food and nutrition situation of children in a country are an essential basis for any SFNE initiative. If key information is missing, there is a risk of “going in blind” and of reducing the possibilities for assessing impact.

- **Purpose:** To identify gaps and needs with regard to the national information systems required for setting the scene and informing effective SFNE initiatives and policies.
- **Preparatory activity / background research (to be completed beforehand):** “General understanding of the situation of schoolchildren, their behaviours and influencers” (see point A under “Background research” for the “Prepare” step in Part I).
- **Directions:** 1) Using the results from the preparatory activity (as noted above), along with the experience and institutional background of the participants, complete Table 1 below. 2) Once completed, identify and decide on the main gaps and propose some ideas/actions to address them.
- **Tip:** Look for gaps in information, issues in analysis and data quality, and needs pertaining to the revision or updating of information.
- **For the facilitator:** Explain the activity and provide all participants with a summary of the results from the preparatory activity. Divide the participants into three groups and ask each of them to complete two or three areas, and to propose any other relevant areas that may have been omitted, including the identified gaps. Groups should report back in plenary. Once the panorama has been set, ask each participant to come up with one or two feasible actions to address the identified gaps. The actions proposed should be clustered, and participants can briefly agree and comment on their priority and feasibility.

Table 1. Availability and quality of information relevant to SFNE

Type of data/information	Is there information at the national level? (Y/N)	Is the information easily accessible and user-friendly? (Y/N)	What is the quality of the information? (Year of last collection, data gaps, coverage, etc.)
Nutritional status of schoolchildren			
Health status of schoolchildren			
Access to health services			
Food consumption of schoolchildren			
Food and nutrition-related KAPP analyses			
Food security and food system analyses			
Education performance data			
Other(s):			

Gaps identified	What needs to be done to address the gaps?

## Activity 2: Policy and legal frameworks

(60 minutes)

A strong and coherent policy and legal basis is critical for the implementation, funding and accountability of SFNE initiatives. Ideally, SFNE should be well placed in policies related to the nutrition, right to food, food security, health, education and/or well-being of schoolchildren.

- **Purpose:** To understand capacity strengths and weaknesses with regard to formulating, revising and implementing adequate policies, strategies and legislative instruments that support SFNE.
- **Preparatory activity / background research (to be completed beforehand):** “A list of the most important policies, laws and other normative documents that relate to or mention SFNE” (see point D under “Background research” for the “Prepare” step in Part I).
- **Directions:** 1) List all the policies, laws and regulations that refer to SFNE. 2) For each one, identify its status, normative framework, clarity of objectives, roles, evidence/need base, and rate its current level of implementation (including reasons if low). Use Table 2 as a model

(sample answers are provided in red). 3) Once completed, identify and decide on the main gaps and propose some ideas/actions on how to address them, in particular by capitalizing on strengths and opportunities.

- **Tip:** Look for outdated or non-existent policies, overly general characterizations of SFNE (for example, with no delineation of measures or responsibilities), policies that are not implemented, and objectives that focus only on increasing knowledge on nutrition (and are not action-based).
- **For the facilitator:** For steps 1 and 2 of the directions as noted above, divide participants into three groups, and ask each group to complete the table for one or two policies (depending on the number of policies identified), as well as for identified gaps. Report back to plenary. For step 3 of the directions, ask the same groups to brainstorm ideas and actions to address the identified gaps. Each group should propose three actions. In plenary, ask participants to vote on the top three in terms of priority and feasibility.

Table 2. Status, quality and extent of implementation of policies, strategies and legislation relevant to SFNE

Name of policy/law/other and entity	Status (draft, current, obsolete) Does it need revision?	Normative framework	Does it define the objectives of SFNE	Does it include / refer to an outline of measures to implement, and responsibilities?	Level of implementation (1–5, with 1 being not implemented at all) and reasons
<i>Law on school feeding, House of Assembly</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Rooted in the Constitution’s right to adequate food.</i>	<i>No, only the general objectives of the law. But it refers to more specific guidelines.</i>	<i>Only includes reference to the institutions in charge of inserting FNE into the national curricula.</i>	<i>3</i>

Gaps identified	What needs to be done to address the gaps?

### Activity 3: Sources of funding for school-based food and nutrition education

(60 minutes)

Without adequate financial resources to cover staff, staff training, learning materials and other essential costs, it is very unlikely that SFNE initiatives can be effective or that they can be brought up to scale.

- **Purpose:** To broadly determine if the sources of funding for SFNE initiatives correspond to the needs.
- **Preparatory activity / background research (to be completed beforehand):** “A collection of expenditure reports and budgets related to SFNE, if any, and a preliminary list of the possible costs related to SFNE initiatives” (see point D under “Background research” for the “Prepare” step in Part I).
- **Directions:** 1) List all known sources that provide funding to SFNE initiatives (for example, the national school budget, school meal programme(s), external donors, etc.). 2) For each source, estimate to what extent it meets the present needs, including with regard to learning materials, staffing, school gardens (only if used for SFNE), training, evaluation, research, and so on. (Note that you will return to this activity at the end of the consultation.) Use Table 3 as a model. 3) Once completed, identify and decide on the main gaps and propose some ideas/actions on how to address them.
- **Tip:** Look for gaps in information on expenditures, inadequate resources or funding flow and capacity weaknesses in advocating for funding mobilization.
- **For the facilitator:** Depending on the number of expenditures collected, divide the participants into two or three groups. Alternatively, if no expenditure reports were found, participants can provide preliminary information based on their affiliations. Ask each group to complete the table, and then report back in plenary. Allow time for general discussion on the estimates of the extent of budget adequacy. *Remind participants that they will come back to this activity at the end of the consultation.* Ask participants to separate into pairs, with each pair to come up with one suggestion for addressing an identified capacity gap.

Table 3. Adequacy of SFNE sources of funding

Source of funding (i.e. yearly budget line, donor support, project basis, etc.)	To what extent does it meet the current needs? (1–5, with 5 meeting needs fully)	Is there capacity to advocate for and mobilize funds for SFNE?
National		
Local		
External		

--	--	--

What needs to be done to address the capacity gaps?

## Activity 4: Signs of political commitment

(40 minutes)

Top-level attitudes, predisposition, and political will are often underestimated or undervalued in SFNE, as they are in many other areas. Nevertheless, if the political climate is not favourable, there are few chances that SFNE will have continuous support and a good enabling environment. Similarly, bottom-up approaches can offer significant potential, but possibilities for bringing them up to scale may be limited, if they are not backed by top-level advocates.

- **Purpose:** To broadly determine if there is a favourable political climate for SFNE.
- **Directions:** 1) Identify and acknowledge broad signs of political interest in SFNE (if any) at the national level, and note any important comments. Add other signs as further identified and discussed. Use Table 4 as a model. 2) Determine if there are important gaps. 3) Suggest a few actions that could bridge these gaps.
- **Tip:** The items in the table will not necessarily render a precise reading on whether the political climate is favourable or unfavourable to SFNE. They are not meant to be taken as the ideal, but rather as a broad qualitative guide.
- **For the facilitator:** Ask the participants to go through the list of signs of commitments favourable to SFNE, and come up with others if possible. In groups, participants should decide if they are present or absent at the national level, and comment on any aspects that seem relevant. Then, ask the groups to identify gaps and some ways to improve top-level commitments for SFNE. Ask the groups to report back to plenary and discuss the proposed actions.

Table 4. Political commitments favourable to SFNE

Signs of commitments favourable to SFNE	Y/N	Comments (e.g. if increasing in recent years, etc.)
SFNE advocacy or awareness initiatives directed at government officials		
SFNE motions submitted for legislature		
High-level posts relevant to SFNE		
SFNE initiatives by nutrition institutions		
Cross-sectoral actions in favour of SFNE		

Participation in international conferences/events related to SFNE		
Other signs of top-level commitment to SFNE:		

Gaps identified	What needs to be done to address the gaps?

## Organizational level

### Activity 5: Roles, priorities and processes

(80 minutes)

Identifying which organizations and institutions are and should be involved in SFNE is highly recommended, as it will help to determine coordination needs and potential overlaps. Concurrently, it also serves as an opportunity to determine whether these organizations and institutions have the adequate capacities to perform SFNE-related work effectively and efficiently.

- **Purpose:** To understand if organizations and institutions involved in SFNE have the know-how and staff needed to implement, monitor and evaluate effective SFNE policy recommendations and programmes.
- **Preparatory activity / background research (to be completed beforehand):** “Identification of preliminary stakeholders” (see point C under “Organization” for the “Prepare” step in Part I).
- **Directions:**

**Part A:** 1) Using the results from the preparatory activity (as noted above), along with the experience and institutional background of the participants, come up with a list of the most important organizations and institutions (including state and non-state) that are currently involved in SFNE. 2) For each one, note their roles and responsibilities with regard to SFNE, and whether these are organizational priorities. 3) Next, identify and agree on a list of organizations that do not currently play a role, but should (along with reasons why). For example: the ministry of agriculture, in order to improve linkages with the school meal programme; and parent associations, in order to support the extension of SFNE at home. Use Table 5 as a model.

**Part B:** 1) For each of the identified organizations and institutions, determine if it has documented processes related to its SFNE roles, adequate human resources, and adequate availability for staff to access training schemes and relevant information. Use Table 6 as a model. 2) Once completed, identify and decide on the main gaps and propose some ideas/actions to address them. Also consider ways to build on existing strengths.
- **Tip:** Look for leading institution(s), overlapping roles, duplication of efforts, areas not covered, roles not matching institutional mandates and low prioritization of SFNE.

- For the facilitator:** Do a quick check in plenary to determine if there are any important organizations that may have been missed. Divide the participants into groups and assign the identified organizations (ideally according to their nature). Ask each group to fill out Table 5 using the results from the preparatory activity. Back in plenary, each group should present the results. Once agreed, ask participants to propose additional organizations that should be involved in SFNE and (if there are too many) allow for voting. For Part B, assign the same groups, and ask each one to complete Table 6, identifying the main gaps and proposing some ideas/actions to bridge these gaps. All groups should then report back in plenary and prioritize the main actions proposed. Allow some time for final discussion.

*Table 5. Current SFNE roles and priorities among organizations and institutions in the country*

Organization /institution	Current SFNE roles and responsibilities (e.g. overall coordination, programme development, curriculum development, learning materials development, technical support, funding, monitoring and evaluation, research and educator training)	Priorities: Are these SFNE roles a priority for the organization/ institution?
<b>Government/state</b>		
<b>Non-state</b>		
Which organizations/institutions are not currently involved in SFNE but should be? Why?		

Table 6. SFNE processes, human resources and training schemes in identified organizations and institutions

Organization/ institution	Are there documented SFNE processes and guidelines? (Y/N)	Are human resources sufficient? Are there adequate job descriptions relevant to SFNE? (Y/N)	Are SFNE training schemes available? (Y/N)	Is there access to information relevant to SFNE? (Y/N)

Gaps identified	What needs to be done to address the gaps?

## Activity 6: Programme-related capacities

(60 minutes)

In addition to an enabling environment and adequate resources, the ability of SFNE programmes (or programmes with an SFNE component) to successfully improve behaviours and practices depends on the quality of their design, the fidelity of the implementation and the degree to which the monitoring and evaluation of their results is used to improve the process. In turn, quality SFNE depends on trained professionals and practitioners who can apply international principles and good practices.

- **Purpose:** To identify capacity strengths and gaps in the design, implementation and evaluation of SFNE-related programmes.
- **Preparatory activity / background research (to be completed beforehand):** “Summary documents of any programmes that carry out food and nutrition education activities in schools” (see point D under “Background research” for the “Prepare” step in Part I).

**Directions:** 1) Identify three important programmes that involve SFNE. 2) For each programme, determine if it conforms to recognized good practices (as listed below). Use Table 7 as a model. 3) Once completed, identify and decide on the main gaps and propose some ideas/actions to address them. Also consider ways to build on existing strengths. If there are no such programmes, write “NONE”.

- **Tip:** Look for gaps or absences in evidence or situation analyses, poor methodological quality, absence of training for front-line educators, lack of coordination with existing programmes, and approaches based entirely on information dissemination.
- **For the facilitator:** Divide the participants into three groups and assign a programme to each. If there are not enough programmes, assign four good practices to each group. Each group should decide if the programme(s) follow the proposed ones. Back in plenary, groups should share their results. Allow some time for discussion and ask participants to spell out the main gaps. Arrange participants in three new groups, and assign one or two gaps to each. Ask them to propose feasible actions to address these gaps. Report and discuss back in plenary.

*Table 7. Good practices of SFNE programmes or programmes with an SFNE component*

Good practices	Programme name		
	1.	2.	3.
Based on situation analysis and priority needs of schoolchildren			
Includes behaviour change objectives			
Uses an evidence-based methodology or applies recognized principles of effective FNE			
The duration and intensity are adequate for achieving the proposed behavioural objectives			
Children and their families (and other important influencers) are active, engaged participants in their own change process			
Not only increases knowledge, but develops outlooks, skills and practices			
Includes action-based or hands-on learning strategies			
The learning content relates directly to the objectives			
The learning materials are culturally relevant and age-appropriate			
Front-line educators are trained in effective SFNE			
Includes reliable tools for outcome and process evaluation			
Promotes or capitalizes on changes in the environment (e.g. policies, food environment, etc.)			
Coordinates with existing relevant programmes, policies, national curriculum, etc.			

Good practices	Programme name		
	1.	2	3.
Other strengths:			

Gaps identified	What needs to be done to address the gaps?

## Activity 7: School system integration

(60 minutes)

Integrating FNE into the formal school system is one of the best opportunities for ensuring long-lasting impact on schoolchildren’s outlooks and practices. However, key aspects of its integration can affect the degree and potential of the results.

- **Purpose:** To identify capacity strengths and gaps in how SFNE is integrated into the school system.
- **Preparatory activity / background research (to be completed beforehand):** “Broad picture of SFNE within the school system” (see point C under “Background research” for the “Prepare” step in Part I).
- **Directions:** 1) Using the output table from the preparatory activity (as noted above), identify the main strengths, weaknesses and gaps in how FNE is integrated within the school system. (Aim for a maximum of four.) 2) Once agreed, identify a few feasible actions to address the gaps. Consider ways to build on existing strengths.
- **Tip:** Look for the main approaches to SFNE implementation, what children need to do, coherence between objectives and learning strategies, assessment at different levels, main content focus, and duration and intensity.
- **For the facilitator:** Provide the results from the preparatory activity to all participants. Divide them into pairs and ask each pair to extract the four main strengths and gaps, and propose actions to address the gaps. Next, ask each pair to join another pair and together prioritize the four main strengths, gaps and proposed actions. Each group should then report back to plenary, and decide on the four overall main strengths, gaps and actions proposed. Allow time for discussion.

Table 8. Main strengths and weaknesses of SFNE within the formal school system

Main strengths (e.g. FNE is available to all grades and has a sequential framework, the curriculum is well linked with the school food environment, there are plenty of hands-on learning strategies, objectives are realistic and practice-based, etc.)	Main gaps/weaknesses (e.g. not all grades receive FNE, there are few hours a year of FNE, FNE is information-based only, FNE is poorly assessed or only with tests, the food environment does not support good FNE, FNE is not linked with school meals and other SFNE components, etc.)

What needs to be done to address the gaps?

## Individual level

### Activity 8: School-based food and nutrition education competences

(80 minutes)

Competences refer to a set of skills, abilities and knowledge that enable a person to act effectively in a variety of situations related to a specific area. In SFNE, competences can be used to set benchmarks for achievement (see Annex 6). This approach enables an in-depth understanding of what key groups are expected to achieve and do, and is therefore particularly useful for capacity development.

- **Purpose:** To understand if key groups of influencers and agents of change have the necessary competences to carry out their SFNE-related work effectively.
- **Preparatory activity / background research (to be completed beforehand):** “Clear and shared understanding and exchange on SFNE”, particularly with regard to Theme 7 of the FAO publication “School-based food and nutrition education – A white paper on the current state, principles, challenges and recommendations for low- and middle-income countries” (see point B under “Background research” for the “Prepare” step in Part I).
- **Directions:** 1) Identify three priority groups that will have the most impact on the quality of SFNE if their capacities are strengthened/improved (for example, school teachers, food service staff, curriculum developers and programme planners/directors). 2) Next, list the most important SFNE functions and key competences that these groups should have in order to impact SFNE effectively. (List a maximum of five per group). Include both technical and functional competences (such as programme management, advocacy, communication, negotiation and

partnership building). 3) Finally, identify and decide on the main gaps (i.e. which competencies are lacking) and barriers to acquiring or applying these competences.

- **Tip:** Note that functions and competences will not always have a one-to-one relationship. A single competence may be enough to carry out more than one function effectively, and more than one competence may be needed to perform a function well. Dedicate enough time to these discussions.
- **For the facilitator:** In plenary, ask participants to propose some groups of individuals that require capacity development. Then, ask each participant to vote on the one or two groups that will have the most impact on the quality of SFNE if their capacities are strengthened/improved. Use the votes to identify the top three groups. Divide the participants into three groups and assign one of these top three to each group of participants. (Ideally, members of the identified groups should be divided accordingly.) Ask each group to complete a table as shown below, and to propose key actions to address identified gaps. All groups should report back in plenary. Allow time for discussion and for prioritization of key actions.

Group 1. \_\_\_\_\_

Current main functions	Main competences needed (including knowledge, skills and attitudes)	Main gaps	Main barriers (e.g. lack of learning opportunities, time, motivation, administrative support, etc.)

Group 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Current main functions	Main competences needed (including knowledge, skills and attitudes)	Main gaps	Main barriers (e.g. lack of learning opportunities, time, motivation, administrative support, etc.)

Group 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Current main functions	Main competences needed (including knowledge, skills and attitudes)	Main gaps	Main barriers (e.g. lack of learning opportunities, time, motivation, administrative support, etc.)

What needs to be done to address the gaps and overcome the barriers?

### Activity 9: Learning opportunities and training schemes

(60 minutes)

Given the evolving and complex nature of this area, access to adequate training and learning opportunities is a key aspect of sustainable SFNE.

- **Purpose:** To determine whether individuals and key groups have access to training and learning opportunities, and whether they are motivated and encouraged to improve/acquire needed competences.
- **Preparatory activity / background research (to be completed beforehand):** “A list of all known training schemes where SFNE is integrated/included” (see point D under “Background research” for the “Prepare” step in Part I).
- **Directions:** 1) List the training schemes available for the groups identified in Activity 8. 2) Indicate the extent and quality of SFNE included in these schemes. If possible, add notes on the main approaches used (for example whether information-based, practice-based, etc.). 3) Next, list the main gaps in these schemes, as well as the main barriers that individuals may face in accessing or making use of existing and future training and learning opportunities.
- **Tip:** Look for information on the methodologies used in training schemes, their main objectives, and their duration and intensity.

**For the facilitator:** Do a quick check in plenary to determine whether there are any important training schemes or learning opportunities not identified or reflected in the research. Divide the participants into groups according to the number of schemes or opportunities identified, and ask

each group to complete Table 9 for one or two of them. All groups should display their results and report back in plenary. Allow time for discussion and for prioritization of proposed actions.

*Table 9. Gaps and barriers in available training schemes and learning opportunities for SFNE*

Target group for training	Training schemes / learning opportunities available that include SNFE (e.g. pre-service, in-service, professional development, project-based, etc.)	Extent of SFNE within the training (e.g. two hours, one-off course, full two-week training, etc.) and approach used	Main gaps (e.g. SFNE is barely covered, training is sporadic or unavailable to all, no credits or certification available, very theoretical approach, no field practice, etc.)	Main barriers (e.g. individuals can't attend training during working hours, in-service programmes are overcrowded, etc.)

What needs to be done to address the gaps and the barriers?

## Activity 10: Comparison of funding estimates for school-based food and nutrition education

(20 minutes)

Earlier in the consultation, Activity 3 involved estimating the financial resources required to adequately cover SFNE needs. Comparing that estimate with a second estimate, developed as part of this activity, offers a good way to gauge whether participant perceptions of estimated needs change as participants get and share more information and as they discuss further what's really needed for effective SFNE.

- **Purpose:** To understand if perceptions regarding estimated needs for quality SFNE change during the consultation.
- **Preparatory activity / background research (to be completed beforehand):** "Sources of funding for SFNE" (see Activity 3 under "Enabling environment", earlier in Part II).
- **Directions:** Having explored the main capacity needs for quality SFNE, compare the original estimate of SFNE needs with a new, revised estimate.

- **For the facilitator:** Ask participants to reflect on the first estimate of resources needed for SFNE. In plenary, gather some opinions and thoughts on whether the original estimate should change. If participants agree that it should, ask them to organize into groups and propose new, revised estimates, along with reasons for their changes.

Table 10. Comparison of funding estimates for SFNE

Source of funding (i.e. yearly budget line, donor support, project basis, etc.)	To what extent does it meet the current needs? (1–5, with 5 meeting needs fully) <i>First estimation</i>	To what extent does it meet the current needs? (1–5, with 5 meeting needs fully) <i>Second estimation</i>	Reasons for changes

## Prioritization and next steps

### Activity 11: Prioritization

(80 minutes)

What are the priority issues? What main capacity gaps and strengths did the capacity assessment process reveal, and which of the issues should be addressed as priorities? As there are rarely enough resources available to address all capacity gaps, identifying priorities is a good way forward.

- **Purpose:** To identify and decide on the specific gaps that should be prioritized, and to agree on proposed actions to bridge them.
- **Preparatory activity / background research (to be completed beforehand):** Activities 1–10 (i.e. all preceding activities as delineated in Part II).
- **Directions:** 1) Look back and review results from all previous activities. 2) Decide on the top five gaps that are most critical to address (considering for example which gaps affect the largest number of potential participants, what the consequences are in failing to address certain gaps, how much incentive and momentum there is for different gaps, which gaps need to be addressed as prerequisites for others, which areas can lead the way for new opportunities, and what is realistic and cost-effective). 3) Next, select the most relevant feasible actions proposed, and identify the people and institutions to be involved. Use Table 11 as a model.
- **For the facilitator:** Ask participants to separate into small groups to discuss and decide on five priority gaps and potential solutions. Next, ask each group to merge with another group and

discuss the priorities they have in common, and then agree on the top five for the merged group. In plenary, ask each of the merged groups to display and present their top five priorities, and promote discussion on any important differences in points of view. Aim to achieve consensus. Alternatively, the number of priorities may be increased.

*Table 11. Priority SFNE gaps, proposed actions to address them and people/institutions responsible*

Priority SFNE gaps and reasons	Proposed actions to address them	Proposed people/institutions responsible

## Activity 12: Next steps

(40 minutes)

Before the consultation concludes, participants should define their potential follow-up roles, which will be critical for buy-in and accountability from the different stakeholders and represented institutions. These roles may be formal or informal, with tasks ranging from specific to general – for example, updating colleagues on the results of the assessment, advocating within their institutions for capacity development in SFNE and instigating action from top management.

Roles for each participant may be decided in a participatory way during the consultation.

Alternatively, if the context and political situation requires some discretion (for example, if there are known or potential conflicts or areas of sensitivity), they may be decided beforehand.

- **Purpose:** To define follow-up roles for the consultation participants and institutions involved.
- **Preparatory activity / background research (to be completed beforehand):** Activities 1–11 (i.e. all preceding activities as delineated in Part II).

**Directions:** Taking into consideration the consultation process as a whole, along with the various needs highlighted, each participant should propose and agree on one main task or role that they could play within and/or outside their institutions, in order to advance and improve capacity development for SFNE. Use Table 12 as a model.

- **For the facilitator:** Ask each participant to write down one follow-up role they would like to have in their own institutions and organizations, and beyond. If there are no known conflicts, the potential roles can be displayed for everyone to see. Allow time for participants to react and comment on each other’s proposals if they want, including for example to propose new or related tasks for each other. Back in plenary, go around the room to determine if each participant is comfortable with the follow-up tasks and roles.



## PART III. KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TOOL

---

The following considerations and recommendations may be helpful for planning, adapting and contextualizing the tool, and ensuring its successful implementation.

### Planning

- Engage existing relevant multisectoral mechanisms (such as food security and nutrition committees and school meal platforms) early on in the process to facilitate the collection of preliminary information, the identification of key actors, and their active participation in the consultation/activities.
- In case of limited resources, engage relevant academic institutions to support the collection and analysis of information for the preliminary research.
- Plan for the application of the tool (both the preliminary research and the subsequent consultation) for a time of the school year that does not coincide with holidays, term cycle closures and other high-demand periods for staff.
- If an in-person consultation is not feasible due to resource constraints, large travel distances for participants or social distancing restrictions, adapt the agenda, activities and materials for virtual formats. In this case, consider:
  - the tools available for conducting virtual meetings and their respective features and limitations;
  - the number of virtual workshops or activities and their duration, so as to avoid participant fatigue (for example, 4–5 three-hour workshops instead of a three-day in-person consultation)
  - any adaptations as necessary to the agenda and activities; and
  - the power dynamics among participants (for the arrangement of working groups).

### Adaptation and contextualization

- Determine whether the activity questions and other materials will require translation, and prepare these accordingly.
- Review the activity questions and other materials for their bearing on issues that may be sensitive to discussion, such as finance and budget allocations; in such cases and where possible, define alternative methods for collecting the information (for example, through individual interviews with key informants or through anonymous surveys).
- Determine whether any of the activities or questions are not relevant and whether they should be removed.
- If there are limitations on time and resources, prioritize the activities according to country needs and priorities.

## Facilitation

- Ensure that the facilitator has an in-depth understanding of SFNE and strong familiarity with the main principles of effectiveness.
- Support the planning process for the consultation/activities such that the facilitator can:
  - ensure that all participants are motivated and confident about sharing their perspectives;
  - guide participant discussions and inputs, and provide strategic prompts and suggestions, for example and particularly when defining potential solutions for addressing capacity gaps, to help ensure that these are not too generic and instead have enough specificity and substance to be useful; and
  - document the process and all inputs clearly and effectively.
- Ensure that the facilitator has the necessary means to contact and follow-up with participants before and/or after the consultation/activities in order to address any missing information, expand on interesting ideas and ensure that key insights are well captured.

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1. Model table: preliminary stakeholder identification

Organization/ institution/group (representative)	Invitation priority (e.g. high, medium, low) and relevance to consultation (e.g. good knowledge of SFNE issues, voices usually not heard, etc.)
<b>State–national level</b>	
<i>Ministry of education (coordinator of nutrition)</i>	<i>High (coordination, development of guidelines and normative documents, teacher training and inspection)</i>
<b>State–local level</b>	
<i>Municipal governments</i>	<i>Medium (monitoring of school meal programme with FNE component)</i>
<b>School level</b>	
<i>Home economics teachers / teacher association (representative)</i>	<i>High (front-line educators)</i>
<b>Non-state</b>	
<i>NGOs</i>	<i>Low (teacher training in school gardens in a few pilot schools)</i>

## Annex 2. Proposed agenda for SFNE capacity needs assessment consultation

Time	Activity
<b>Day 1</b>	
(30 minutes)	Welcome remarks and introductions among consultation participants
(60 minutes)	World Café: The basics of high-quality, effective SFNE
(60 minutes)	Presentation: The food, nutrition and education situation of schoolchildren Multiple rounds of questions and answers
(20 minutes)	Break (informal exchange of experiences in SFNE)
(40 minutes)	Activity 1: National information systems relevant to SFNE Group work and clustering
(60 minutes)	Activity 2: Policy and legal frameworks Group work and voting
(60 minutes)	Lunch break
(60 minutes)	Activity 3: Sources of funding for SFNE Group work and discussion
(40 minutes)	Activity 4: Signs of political commitment Group work
(20 minutes)	Break
(60 minutes)	General discussion and closure of Day 1
<b>Day 2</b>	
(20 minutes)	Recap of Day 1
(80 minutes)	Activity 5: Roles, priorities and processes Group work, voting and discussion
(20 minutes)	Break (informal exchange of experiences in SFNE)
(60 minutes)	Activity 6: Programme-related capacities Group work and discussion
(30 minutes)	Presentation: Broad picture of food and nutrition education in the school system
(60 minutes)	Activity 7: School system integration Group work and discussion
(60 minutes)	Lunch break
(80 minutes)	Activity 8: SFNE competences Voting, group work and voting
(40 minutes)	General discussion and closure of Day 2
<b>Day 3</b>	
(20 minutes)	Recap of Day 2
(60 minutes)	Activity 9: Learning opportunities and training schemes Group work and discussion
(20 minutes)	Break
(20 minutes)	Activity 10: Comparison of funding estimates for SFNE Reflection

Time	Activity
(80 minutes)	Activity 11: Prioritization Group work and discussion
(40 minutes)	Activity 12: Next steps Display of tasks and roles
(20 minutes)	Closure and wrap-up

*Note:* Consider setting aside adequate time for icebreakers, energizers and similar exercises.

## Annex 3. Model table: Broad picture of SFNE within the school system

Area	Description
<p>How is FNE integrated into the formal school system? (E.g. as a stand-alone subject in the curriculum, integrated within a specific subject, covered through extracurricular activities, varies from school to school, etc.)</p>	
<p>Do all grades receive SFNE?</p>	
<p>On average, how many hours per year do students receive SFNE?</p>	
<p>Who are the front-line educators? (E.g. teachers, food service staff, NGO staff, government staff, volunteers, peers, etc.)</p>	
<p>What are the main learning approaches used? <i>(Indicate all that apply and describe them briefly.)</i></p> <p><b>1. Information/knowledge-based</b>, including through lectures and presentations, dissemination of messages, and/or using information materials and channels;</p> <p><b>2. Interaction</b> (including through discussions, debates, group work, sharing of experiences, stories and role play), problem-solving and self-assessments;</p> <p><b>3. Practice/action-based</b>, including through hands-on learning / learning-by-doing, skill development (e.g. cooking, planting, gardening, eating, experimenting and choosing);</p> <p><b>4. Demonstration-based</b>, including during meal times, cooking demonstrations, trips to farms/industries, etc.; and</p> <p><b>5. Outreach</b>, including through homework, getting parents involved, research, observation and practising in familiar settings.</p>	
<p>What are the main topics addressed in the SFNE syllabus? (E.g. food groups, nutrients, selecting nutritious foods, food safety, messages on healthy eating, nutrition in the life cycle, food-based dietary guidelines, health risks of poor diets, growing nutritious foods, food preparation, sustainable diets, sociocultural aspects of foods, food chains, etc.)</p>	

Area	Description
Where does the <i>bulk</i> of SFNE take place? (E.g. in the classroom, in the school garden, in the canteen, at home, in the community, etc.)	
Are quality SFNE learning materials available and regularly used? (I.e. are they culturally relevant, age-appropriate, sequential, directed at practices and behaviours; are they creative and engaging; and/or do they involve influencers and links to other school components?)	
Is there a regular assessment of SFNE progress and results? What type of results are assessed? (E.g. changes in knowledge, changes in attitudes and perceptions, acquired skills, improved food practices, changes in diet, changes in nutritional status, etc.)	
What are the features of the school food environment? (E.g. food vendors, canteens, tuck shops, vending machines, publicity of foods, facilities to eat and wash hands, etc.)	

## Annex 4. Model table: follow up

Level		Main capacity strengths	Main capacity gaps	Proposed actions to address the gap
Enabling environment	National information systems			
	Policy and legal frameworks			
	Sources of funding			
	Signs of political commitment			
Organizational	Roles, priorities and processes			
	Programme-related capacities			
	School system integration			
Individual	SFNE competences			
	Learning opportunities and training schemes			

Note: Identified priorities should be indicated clearly, for example with a different colour or asterisks.

## Annex 5. Key considerations for conducting an SFNE learning needs assessment

Learning needs assessments (LNAs) are useful for:

- analysing the specific learning needs of identified individuals and the context in which they operate
- Understanding possible follow-up actions that could help to maximize the implementation of learning and its transfer to the organizational context
- Understanding additional/complementary activities (other than learning) required to address the capacity needs sustainably

A LNA can be conducted in several ways, depending on the time frame, the budget and the size of the learning initiative. Some of the principal methods used include questionnaires, key informant interviews, focus groups and online surveys. In planning the approach, the following key areas of interest should be assessed:

1. Organizational goals and context: to explore the goals and/or desired changes of the organization, understand the role of individuals within the organization, and identify complementary activities required to achieve more effective and sustainable results.
2. Participant profiles and existing knowledge/skills: to identify existing skill and knowledge assets that can help achieve organizational goals or bring about the desired changes.
3. Current job tasks and knowledge/skill gaps: to identify key performance issues/gaps, and to define learning content that can help address those gaps.
4. Follow-up requirements: to identify opportunities and challenges for learners to apply their learning and determine possible follow-up requirements.

For the purpose of providing an example in the SFNE context, the target group is assumed to be school teachers providing FNE to students as part of the national curriculum.

In preparing for the LNA, the following questions are recommended for inclusion:

- For teachers and school officials: How necessary do you think it is to have quality SFNE in schools?
- For teachers and school officials: Do you think is necessary for educators to receive training in FNE?
- For teachers and school officials: What are the main barriers for teaching FNE?
- For teachers: How confident do you feel in teaching FNE?
- For teachers: Do you think you need additional training to conduct SFNE effectively?
- For teachers: In which areas do you consider you need additional training? (E.g. active learning strategies to support changes in practices, basics of nutrition, assessment of SFNE, etc.)
- For teachers: What prevents you from attending available learning opportunities?
- For teachers: Which training method do you think would be best for SFNE?
- For teachers: How often would you be able to attend training courses?

## Annex 6. Proposed professional competences related to SFNE

Proposed competences related to SFNE	
Curriculum developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use basic information about the nutrition, health and dietary situation of schoolchildren to set key behavioural goals;</li> <li>• Recognize that a wide range of factors influence what children eat and choose;</li> <li>• Create sequences and structures that follow strategically from goals;</li> <li>• Develop action-based FNE curriculums;</li> <li>• Design culturally relevant, age-appropriate, hands-on learning materials for SFNE;</li> <li>• Promote linkages to the whole school; and</li> <li>• Use a range of creative and innovative strategies to develop appropriate learning strategies.</li> </ul>
Front-line educators (e.g. teachers, NGO staff, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize the teaching of the FNE curriculum, including managing their own resources (particularly in terms of time);</li> <li>• Communicate and justify to school-level managers the resources (time and financial support) required to teach the curriculum effectively;</li> <li>• Organize work plans that reflect national standards / defined expectations for FNE (or, in the absence of national standards, organize work plans that reflect current good practices in FNE);</li> <li>• Promote FNE outside the classroom and work collaboratively with others to promote FNE as essential to the well-being of the whole school;</li> <li>• Use food-related opportunities as learning opportunities to reinforce classroom teaching (e.g. school meals, food vendors, marketing materials, etc.);</li> <li>• Ensure that the learning content is adapted to the situation and context of the students (including food culture, socio-economic issues, traditions, food availability, etc.);</li> <li>• Select and demonstrate appropriate teaching strategies during different stages of hands-on activities;</li> <li>• Motivate and support children to share their own experiences and check their own progress;</li> <li>• Prepare or look for resources that support effective learning; and</li> <li>• Exemplify current healthy diet recommendations and act as role models for students.</li> </ul>
Learning material writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize work plans and material structure according to priority behavioural objectives;</li> <li>• Develop materials that follow a coherent sequence, with adequate and action-based activities;</li> <li>• Promote the application of learning in familiar settings;</li> <li>• Design materials that are developmentally and contextually appropriate, or easily adaptable by end users;</li> <li>• Revise and adapt materials in light of piloting results;</li> <li>• Provide clear instructions and guidelines on using the materials effectively; and</li> <li>• Adapt materials to reflect resource constraints.</li> </ul>

Proposed competences related to SFNE	
Food service staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are aware of the importance of a healthy and balanced diet;</li> <li>• Promote the consumption of meals and food options that are in line with what is taught in the classroom;</li> <li>• Identify the food groups that are being provided in the school meals;</li> <li>• Understand basic information about meal composition and communicate it effectively to students;</li> <li>• Actively promote the benefits of a healthy diet; and</li> <li>• Act as role models for safe food handling.</li> </ul>





[www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

ISBN 978-92-5-135300-4



9 789251 353004

CB7584EN/1/12.21