



**ASEAN REGIONAL GUIDELINES ON  
FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION POLICY**

**2017**

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## **PREFACE**

The ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Food Security and Nutrition Policy (Regional Guidelines) were completed by the ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board (AFSRB).

Established in response to the endorsement of the 1979 Agreement on ASEAN Food Security Reserve, the AFSRB served as a forum for coordinating periodic exchanges of information on national food policies, undertaking a periodic evaluation of the food situation and prospect in ASEAN region as well as worldwide and examining immediate, short term and long term policy action as may be considered necessary to assure adequate supplies of basic food commodity and providing recommendation for appropriate action to the Government concerned. The collaborative development of the Regional Guidelines by 2017 is a priority for AFSRB. Other areas of focus of AFSRB during the next 10 years include the implementation of the Vision and Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry, 2016-2025 and the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework on Food Security, the Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security, 2015-2020.

For the purpose of the Regional Guidelines, food security and nutrition (FSN) policy is defined as those government measures that directly affect the behavior of different stakeholders (amongst other producers, farmers and regulators). FSN policy basically covers key elements to put in place a set of policies that promote food security and nutrition in ASEAN.

The Regional Guidelines are based on countries/regional experience and international best practices. They set out different policies and institutional options that serve as reference guides for AMSs in their efforts to ensure FSN. The Regional Guidelines are not intended to be a full or binding statement on FSN. The Regional Guidelines will help increase AMSs' awareness of the importance of FSN policies, with a view to stimulating the development of best practices and enhancing cooperation between ASEAN Member States.

The Regional Guidelines, which are public document, will be a living reference as AFSRB will update them frequently to reflect any changes and development in ASEAN, and international/regional best practices.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE REGIONAL GUIDELINES

### 1.1. Background

World Leaders at the 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) reaffirmed the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger. The UN Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge launched at Rio+20 called on governments, civil society, faith communities, the private sector, and research institutions to unite to end hunger and eliminate the worst forms of malnutrition.

The Sustainable Development Goal to “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” (SDG2) recognizes the inter linkages among supporting sustainable agriculture, empowering small farmers, promoting gender equality, ending rural poverty, ensuring healthy lifestyles, tackling climate change, and other issues addressed within the set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The Zero Hunger Challenge has since garnered widespread support from AMSs and other entities. It calls for: (i) Zero stunted children under the age of two (ii) 100% access to adequate food all year round (iii) All food systems are sustainable (iv) 100% increase in smallholder productivity and income and (v) Zero loss or waste of food.

Future food security challenges include population growth, pressures on natural resources and ecosystem services, and adverse impacts of climate change on agriculture, affecting growing conditions and making adaptation measures necessary. Moreover, key issues in the current food security agenda, such as nutrition, price volatility, social protection and safety nets, biofuels, food safety, research and innovation, large-scale land acquisition, and the “Right to Food” concept need integration into an overall policy framework.

FSN is about ensuring that everybody is able to access sufficient, affordable and nutritious food. ASEAN seeks to build resilience to food crises and help AMSs ensure that no one is left hungry. In particular, fighting under-nutrition is vital to give the ASEAN's poorest children a chance to lead healthier lives and learn.

In 2014, the 36th Meeting of ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry endorsed the new ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and Strategic Plan of Action – Food Security (SPA-FS) 2015-2020, which incorporates a new component on nutrition to enable ASEAN to address new developments and challenges in the realisation of the common goal for sustainable food security and nutrition. At the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, the ASEAN Leaders reaffirmed to promote a common and unified position to ensure sustainable food security and nutrition in ASEAN.

In 2015, the 37<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry issued the Statement of ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry on Food Security and Nutrition to ensure sustainable supply of sufficient, affordable, safe and nutritious foods that meet the dietary requirements of increasing populations in the region.

In 2016, SOM AMAF Leaders adopted the Matrix of Key Areas of Cooperation and Joint Activities for ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Cooperation on Food Security and Nutrition with nine (9) priority areas. At the Preparatory Senior Officials Meeting of the Thirty Eighth Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (PrepSOM-38th AMAF), held on 3-4 October 2016 in Singapore, SOM-AMAF Leaders agreed in principle to the development of the ASEAN Guidelines on Food Nutrition-Related Policies. The specific name and detail of the Guidelines would be further agreed by the ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board (AFSRB).

Considering the development of the food security and nutrition in ASEAN, the AFSRB agreed to develop the document, namely “**ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Food Security and Nutrition Policy**”. Subsequently, the Regional Guidelines was endorsed by the 39<sup>th</sup> AMAF Meeting in September 2017, in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

## **1.2. Objective and Benefit of Regional Guidelines**

The Regional Guidelines serve as general Framework guide for the AMSs as they endeavour to introduce, implement and develop FSN policies in accordance with the economic context and specific regulations in AMSs.

The Regional Guidelines endeavour to help in the process of building stronger FSN cooperation and integration in the region, by acting as common reference guide for future cooperation to enhance FSN in ASEAN. It is important to note that the Regional Guidelines serve only as reference and, are not binding on the AMSs. The Regional Guidelines take into account the different development stages of FSN policies in AMSs.

## **PART 1: OBJECTIVES AND BENEFIT OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION POLICY**

### **1.1. Definition of FSN Policy**

FSN policy encompasses laws, regulations, decisions and actions by the government and other institutions that influence food security and nutrition, production, distribution and consumption. FSN policy can also be broadly defined as a governmental policy that promotes, maintains or ensures the level of food security and nutrition in the country, and includes governmental measures that directly affect the behavior of producers, farmers and regulators. FSN policy basically put in place a set of policies that promote and ensure FSN in the country.

For the purposes of the Regional Guidelines, the term “FSN Policy” refers to public policies and general governmental directions aimed at introducing, increasing and ensuring food security and nutrition. It does include, but it is not limited to “agricultural and nutrition laws and regulations” and the establishment of a FSN regulatory body is to promote agriculture, food security, food safety and nutrition. Hereafter, the Regional Guidelines will use the general term “FSN Policy”.

**Nutrition security** exists when all people at all times consume food of sufficient quantity and quality in terms of variety, diversity, nutrient content and safety to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health, education and care.

**Nutrition-enhancing agriculture:** When agriculture that effectively and explicitly incorporates nutrition objectives, concerns and considerations to improve nutrition through increasing the availability, access to and consumption of a nutritionally adequate diet from a variety and diversity of nutritious and safe foods.

**Nutrition-sensitive agriculture** is a food-based approach to agricultural development that puts nutritionally rich foods, dietary diversity, and food fortification at the heart of overcoming malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. Nutrition-sensitive agriculture aims to narrow the gap between available and accessible food and the food needed for a healthy and balanced diet for all people. It explicitly incorporates nutrition objectives into agriculture and addresses the utilization dimension of food and nutrition security, including health, education, economic, environmental and social aspects.

FSN policy is also beneficial to ASEAN as problems of food insecurity and malnutrition – of under-nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and obesity – exist in all countries and cut across socio-economic classes. Besides contributing to agricultural policy, FSN policy can accommodate other policy objectives (both economic and social) such as building nutrition skills and capacity through systematic training particularly front liner workers, agriculture personal to undertake nutrition activities, promotion of agro-biodiversity for improved nutrition and climate change adaptation and undertaking research on innovative agricultural technologies.

In particular, FSN policy may have positive impact on improving policy coherence supportive to food safety with special focus on market expansion and improvement of market access for vulnerable groups through food price policies, trade policies, and agricultural land conversion. FSN policy also complements agricultural policy, rural development and poverty eradication policy and health policy.

## **1.2. Main objectives and benefits of FSN policy**

The most commonly stated objective of FSN policy is to ensure sustainable supply of sufficient, affordable, safe and nutritious foods that meet the dietary requirements of increasing populations in ASEAN. FSN policy introduce various options for different stakeholders that will help incorporate nutrition objectives, components, measurable indicators into the design of food and agricultural, trade, food security policies and programmes. The introduction of FSN policy will provide ASEAN with a set of proposals and options that promote inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination mechanisms between ASEAN Sectoral Bodies related to agriculture, health, rural development, education environment, economic, labour, energy, social welfare and others.

### ***Improve food and agricultural systems' governance for nutrition***

AMSs may need to shape more inclusive, participatory and evidence-based systems of governance of food and nutrition security. This includes policy-making processes, as well as platforms and initiatives where stakeholders need to work together to understand problems and develop solutions. Empowering processes should be put in place to place nutrition on the policy agenda and to enable people, especially the most vulnerable, to participate in and influence the decisions that affect their lives.

### ***Improve national food security and nutrition***

The key objectives are to make certain that AMSs have reliable access to the food they need and are able to utilize that food to live active and healthy lives. As such, ensuring food security and good nutrition is not a policy choice of AMSs that it can decide to accept or reject, but a right of the citizens of AMSs which the governments are obligated to respect, promote, and protect.

### ***Improve households' food security and nutrition***

Households are food secure when they have year-round access to the amount and variety of safe foods their members need to lead active and healthy lives. At the household level, food security refers to the ability of the household to secure, either from its own production or through purchases, adequate food for meeting the dietary needs of all members of the household.

The nutritional status of each member of the household depends on several conditions being met: the food available to the household must be shared according to individual needs; the food must be of sufficient variety, quality and safety; and each family member must have good health status in order to benefit from the food consumed.

Achieving the 1996 World Food Summit (WFS) nutrition-related goals requires that national and sectoral development policies and programmes are complemented by effective community-based action aimed at improving household food security and promoting the year-round consumption of nutritionally adequate diets. These actions need to occur within the framework of promoting sustainable livelihoods and need to address the variety of locally-relevant issues leading to various forms of malnutrition, including problems of chronic and seasonal food shortages, lack of dietary diversity, inadequate family care and feeding practices, and poor living conditions.

### ***Increase agricultural productivities to alleviate poverty***

Agricultural productivity determines the price of food, which then determines wage costs and the competitiveness of tradable goods leading to a confluence of effects that determine the real income effects of increased output for farming households. Increased agricultural

output can change the relative prices of agricultural outputs in relation to substitute or complementary products, as well as the costs of inputs to production.

***Strengthen national, regional, and local capacities to formulate and implement policies and programmes to improve nutritional status***

AMSs may need to strengthen countries' capacities to lead in the planning, prioritization, development, and implementation of nutritional policies, programmes, and strategies across the three dimensions of capacity development, namely individuals, organizations, and the enabling environment (primarily the policy and regulatory environment), to improve nutritional status.

In conclusion, each AMS may decide which of the objectives it wishes to pursue, taking into account their own national FSN policy needs.

**1.3. FSN Regulatory Body**

The objective of the FSN policy can be achieved through the setting up of one or more food security and nutrition regulatory bodies. Each AMS may consider adopting a proactive stance to ensure food security and nutrition by taking not only various options to reduce poverty and food insecurity but also by undertaking a review of its institutional arrangement and public policies, and then adopting the appropriate policy changes.

**PART 2: COVERAGE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION POLICY**

FSN is an issue, which cuts across many different policy spheres. Macroeconomic parameters and policy options, for example, may well have as much or even more impact on FSN if compared with policies specifically aimed at the food and agricultural sector. The coverage of national FSN policy may include in the following policies:

**2.1. Agricultural policies**

There are closely links between agricultural sector policies and FSN, not only because of the importance of the agricultural sector for securing food production and supply, but also because of its role as major source of livelihood for the majority of the poor and vulnerable populations in AMSs.

Agricultural policies include a wide set of different policy interventions, such as agricultural research, training and extension policies, climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk management, promotion of new and improved agricultural technologies, land use policies, natural resource conservation, agricultural credits, and agricultural pricing, stocking and marketing policies. Through their manifold impacts on agricultural incomes, rural employment, food production and prices, agricultural sector policies simultaneously affect both access/demand and production/supply in various ways.

**2.2. Marketing and pricing policies**

Marketing and pricing policies comprise all measures and regulation, which affect the functioning of markets and prices of food. The policies may be guided by different objectives, for example to provide incentive prices to producers in order to increase their incomes or food production, to protect producers or consumers against price fluctuation, to control consumer prices and to keep them low, to ensure steady food supplies for urban consumers, etc. In general, such policies have impacts on both the supply and demand side of the food economy.

**2.3. Trade policies**

International trade can make substantial contributions to the FSN of countries and households. Food supplies can be stabilized and increased by food imports, the import of production inputs helps to increase domestic food production and supplies, export

production generates employment and income for large segments of the population, and the foreign exchange earned from exports allows countries to buy what they need on the world market.

Trade policies refer to tariffs and regulations concerning imports and exports. The agricultural sector has specifically been subjected to tariff and non-tariff trade barriers (import and export taxes, import and export quotas/restriction, variable levies). Trade policies have crucial implications for FSN because they affect food prices and volume of food supplies available at the internal market. Trade barriers usually imply higher prices and a reduced volume of supplies, which affects food access and availability.

#### **2.4. Infrastructure policies**

Infrastructure policies, especially policies to establish, expand and maintain the transport infrastructure in a country, are relevant for FSN under various aspects:

- An improved road network strengthens the marketing link within a country. It facilitates the transport of food from surplus to deficit areas and reduces marketing costs, benefiting producers as well as consumers.
- An expansion of the road network, e.g through a feeder road programme, establish new marketing links to areas with yet untapped production potential. Producers gain from new marketing possibilities, and overall food supplies from domestic production will increase.
- Road construction and maintenance can be done with substantial manual labour inputs, e.g in the framework of public work schemes, which leads to employment and income generation during the investment phase.

#### **2.5. Poverty alleviation and social sector policies**

Poverty alleviation and social sector policies comprise all policies measures aimed at safeguarding minimum standards of living of the population, such as social safety net and targeted employment and income generation programmes. By generating income or providing transfer in cash or kind to vulnerable people, such measures play a key role in improving access to food.

Due to the dimensions of poverty and limited budgetary and administrative capacities, many countries lack the means to support a comprehensive public social safety net and unable to reach all people in need. NGOs, community and religious organization and other civil societies often play a major role in the social security system in many countries. Therefore, an essential element of social security policies is to provide a conducive legal and institutional framework for these organisations, enabling them to work effectively.

#### **2.6. Health policies**

Health and nutrition are closely interrelated. Many common diseases are directly or indirectly caused or aggravated by quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate and/or imbalance nutrition, and ill health often leads to sub-optimal utilization of nutrients contained in the food actually consumed that leads to double burden of malnutrition. Crucial health related aspects of nutrition are quality of water, general hygiene, and food preparation methods. Only by combining sufficient food intake with complementary aspects of caring capacity, health and environmental factors, FSN can be achieved.

#### **2.7. Education policies**

Education policies are relevant for FSN under various aspects:

Better education implies, in general better knowledge about food production, farm and household management and nutrition issues, contributing to improved FSN from various sides. Especially the promotion of education of girls and women is likely to have positive side effects on food utilization and household FSN in medium term.

Child health and nutrition programmes are more effective and more sustainable if combined with education and training mothers. Therefore, mother and child health care and nutrition programmes often include education and training components which are relevant for FSN

School feeding is a component of primary education in many countries. It serves a dual purpose of providing a channel for distributing food to children of low income families and being an incentive for such families to send the children to school. This can contribute to increased school enrolment and attendance among school age children while also improving their health and nutrition status. School feeding programmes can be appropriate in emergency/crisis situation to encourage children to attend school, protect from harmful impact and restore an element of normalcy in their lives. Promotion of linkages between agriculture sectors and the School Lunch Project in order to raise awareness and increase desirable behaviors in nutrition and health.

## **2.8. Population policies**

In many countries, rapid population growth is putting a heavy strain on natural resource. Prospects for sustainable development and the capacity of the population to attain FSN are endangered. Therefore, policies to curb population growth are to be seen as an essential element of a long-term strategy towards FSN. Again, especially education for girls and women, sex education, and policies strengthening their social and economic position play a key role. Such measures are precondition if direct birth control measures are to be effective.

## **2.9. Macroeconomic policies**

The macroeconomic environment is determined by the rules of the existing economic-political framework and key parameters, often set by government, which form the conditions for economic development within an economy and its relations with external economies. The parameters can be grouped into three broad areas: (a) those effecting international resource flows, such as exchange rate regulation; (b) those set by government in budgeting its own operations, i.e fiscal mechanisms such as taxation and public expenditure; and those concerned with the monetary regime, such as credit supply and the rate of interest. Some general statement can be made on the implications and the nature of effects of macroeconomic policies on food security and nutrition.

## **2.10 Exchange rate policies**

The currency exchanges rate determines the prices of food and other commodities being exported or imported, the volume of exports/imports, and hence influence the volume of production and supplies available on the internal markets. An overvalued currency leads to depressed domestic market prices of tradable commodities and favours imports over exports. As staple food commodities, especially grains, are usually tradable goods, food prices are kept relatively low. This have positive implications (positive real income effects) for market dependent consumers, but negative implications for local producers of imported and exported items (depressed sales prices) and for the volume for domestic agricultural and food production in general. On the other hand, an overvalued exchange rate also leads to lover prices of imported production inputs (e.g. fertilizer, machinery, plant protection materials), which partly compensates for these negative effects. The effects as described above are reserved if a currency is devalued, a policy frequently pursued under economic stabilization and structural adjustment programmes. In summary, the major impact of exchange rate policies on FSN is on: (a) the prices of (main staple) food and other commodities, (b) the real income of market dependent consumers, (c) the returns and the nominal income of agricultural producers, (d) the volume of domestic food production and food demand, depending on response of food production and demand to price changes (price and income elasticity) and (e) the volume of food supplies from domestic production and of imports.

### **2.11. Fiscal policies**

Fiscal policies refer to the group of fiscal measures (taxes, subsidies and expenditures) that governments apply to influence the working of an economy. As the public sector makes up a major share of the GDP, the governments themselves generally are the single most important economic force in a country. Hence, just by volume, fiscal policy has substantial influence on all spheres of an economy. Taxation and government spending influence FSN in many ways, e.g: government expenditure for food and other subsidies lead to cheaper supplies for consumers; government expenditure for social security system; e.g through transfer in cash or in kind, ensure minimum subsistence levels; government spending for education and health services may have positive impact on food utilization and government investments in social and economic infrastructure may have positive longer term impact on FSN.

If government expenditures exceed revenues, budgetary deficits need to be tackled, and the management of this problem constitutes a major element of most economic stabilization and structural adjustment programmes. Common approaches are a reduction of government expenditures; e.g by cutting back government staff, reducing/removal of subsidies, reducing social sector expenditures and investments. This often adversely affects FSN of poor and vulnerable population groups, which in turn requires specifically targeted interventions to help these groups.

Fiscal measures to address consumption of foods and beverages high in added sugar, sodium, as well as saturated and trans fat (e.g. taxes), can be considered as a complement to campaigns/programs aimed at reducing intake of added sugar, sodium, saturated fat and trans fat, taking into account national circumstances and priorities.

### **2.12. Monetary policies**

Monitory policies and fiscal policies are closely linked because budgetary deficits are often financed through the mechanism of monetary expansion. Monetary policies determine the volume of money supply and credit costs (interest rate). The impacts of monetary policies on FSN are rather indirect, and are shown by the investment responses of farmers and other agents involved in the food chain (e.g traders, transporters and public marketing organisations) as well as by general employment and income effects of a changing rate investment in the economy induced by any changes in credit supply and interest rates.

## ***PART 3: ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION BODY/INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AND SECTOR REGULATOR***

### **3.1. Roles and responsibilities of FSN Regulatory Body**

AMSs may consider to give the FSN Regulatory Body the mandate to:

- a. Implement and enforce national FSN policy and law
- b. Interpret and elaborate on FSN policy and law
- c. Advocate FSN policy and law
- d. Provide advices on FSN policy and law to the different stakeholders
- e. Act internationally as national bodies representative of the country in international FSN matters

In fulfilling the mandate, the FSN regulatory body may undertake responsibilities such as:

- a. Establishing and issuing regulations and other implementing measure
- f. Developing and disseminating plain language guidelines and publications to stakeholders on FSN policy and law provisions
- g. Developing and publishing comprehensive guidelines on how the FSN regulatory body will apply the law and regulation on FSN
- h. Carrying out FSN advocacy and education activities

- b. Interpreting the FSN law provisions or shaping the scope of FSN policy and law
- c. Establishing and maintaining databases of FSN
- d. Promoting exchange of non-confidential information with other FSN regulatory bodies, and in the international fora.
- e. Promoting capacity building, best practices sharing, liaison, training and work updates with other FSN regulatory bodies.

The FSN regulatory body should be equipped with the necessary resources and powers, as well as having appropriate processes and procedures in place to carry out the responsibilities as above mentioned. Where appropriate, the FSN regulatory body may seek public feedback and launch consultations on relevant issues before it makes a decision.

### **3.2. Institutional Structure of FSN regulatory body**

In considering the establishment of a FSN regulatory structure, AMSs should determine whether they would:

- a. Establish a standalone independent statutory authority responsible for FSN policy administration and enforcement.
- b. Create different statutory authorities respectively responsible for FSN policy administration and enforcement within specific areas.
- c. Retain FSN regulatory body functions within the relevant government department or ministry.

AMSs may establish the FSN regulatory body's internal structure and functioning and set up internal rules of procedure, or leave these to the FSN regulatory body to determine itself.

## **PART 4: LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES**

### **4.1. Relevant Legislation and Guidelines for FSN policy**

The AMSs should provide for clear and effective legislation when drafting their FSN policy regimes. The AMSs may choose to adopt a basic legislation containing key broad provisions and introduce secondary legislation (e.g., regulations and guidelines) to implement or clarify the more operational aspects of the policy, processes or procedural issues, and provide guidance on how the FSN regulatory body will interpret the law.

Secondary legislation may be implemented by the Government or by the FSN regulatory body. The legislation may require the FSN regulatory body to seek public consultations on proposed regulations and guidelines, before the FSN regulatory body issues the regulations and guidelines.

*The legislation and guidelines may include provisions relating to:*

- a. Shaping food and agricultural systems to be more nutrition-sensitive so to produce good nutritional outcomes.
- b. Increasing incentives (and decrease disincentives) for availability, access, and consumption of diverse, nutritious and safe foods through environmentally sustainable production, trade, and distribution.
- c. Monitoring dietary consumption and access to safe, diverse, and nutritious foods.
- d. Including measures that protect and empower the poor and women.
- e. Developing capacity in human resources and institutions to improve nutrition through the food and agriculture sector, supported with adequate financing
- f. Supporting multi-sectoral strategies to improve nutrition within national, regional, and local government structures.

***Agricultural programme and investments can strengthen nutrition if the following issues could be considered:***

- g. Incorporate explicit nutrition objectives and indicators into their design, and track and mitigate potential harms, while seeking synergies with economic, social and environmental objectives
- h. Assess the context at the local level, to design appropriate activities to address the types and causes of malnutrition. Context assessment can include potential food resources, agro-ecology, seasonality of production and income, access to productive resources such as land, market opportunities and infrastructure, gender dynamics and roles, opportunities for collaboration with other sectors or programmes, and local priorities.
- i. Target the vulnerable and improve equity through participation, access to resources, and decent employment. Vulnerable groups include smallholders, women, youth, the landless, urban dwellers, the unemployed.
- j. Collaborate and coordinate with other sectors (health, environment, social protection, labor, water and sanitation, education, energy) and programmes, through joint strategies with common goals, to address concurrently the multiple underlying causes of malnutrition.
- k. Maintain or improve the natural resource base (water, soil, air, climate, biodiversity), critical to the livelihoods and resilience of vulnerable farmers and to sustainable food and nutrition security for all. Manage water resources in particular to reduce vector-borne illness and to ensure sustainable, safe household water sources.
- l. Empower women by ensuring access to productive resources, income opportunities, extension services and information, credit, labor and time-saving technologies (including energy and water services), and supporting their voice in household and farming decisions. Equitable opportunities to earn and learn should be compatible with safe pregnancy and young child feeding.
- m. Facilitate production diversification, and increase production of nutrient-dense crops and small-scale livestock (for example, horticultural products, legumes, livestock and fish at a small scale, underutilized crops, and biofortified crops). Diversified production systems are important to vulnerable producers to enable resilience to climate and price shocks, more diverse food consumption, reduction of seasonal food and income fluctuations, and greater and more gender-equitable income generation.
- n. Improve processing, storage and preservation to retain nutritional value, shelf-life, and food safety, to reduce seasonality of food insecurity and post-harvest losses, and to make healthy foods convenient to prepare.
- o. Expand markets and market access for vulnerable groups, particularly for marketing nutritious foods or products vulnerable groups have a comparative advantage in producing. This can include innovative promotion (such as marketing based on nutrient content), value addition, access to price information, and farmer associations.
- p. Incorporate nutrition promotion and education around food and sustainable food systems that builds on existing local knowledge, attitudes and practices. Nutrition knowledge can enhance the impact of production and income in rural households, especially important for women and young children, and can increase demand for nutritious foods in the general population.

**4.2. Review of new or existing legislations**

The AMSs may consider whether the FSN policy is compatible or consistent with new or existing legislations. The AMSs may review any new or existing legislation that imposes significant restrictions on food security and nutrition as an integral part of national FSN policy.

The AMSs may consider a comprehensive review of FSN-related legislation in order to determine whether FSN concerns can be addressed by potentially less restrictive means.

## **PART 5: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

### **5.1. Definition of technical assistance and capacity building**

Technical Assistance refers to the sharing of skill best practices and knowledge with a FSN regulatory body (or other authority) by other FSN regulatory bodies, donor agencies and international organisations.

Capacity building refers to a more indigenous process of putting in place sustainable FSN policy frameworks and processes necessary for effective FSN policy administration, enforcement, advocacy and the future development of the FSN regulatory body.

Technical assistance is one way by which a FSN regulatory body can improve its capacity to establish and enforce FSN policy, while the FSN regulatory body can also build capacity through direct recruitment, procurement and organisational learning.

### **5.2. Guiding Principles on Technical Assistance and Capacity Building**

The following are guiding principles on technical assistance and capacity building programmes which the AMSs may adopt:

- a. Adherence to country-specific needs: The design of effective technical assistance and capacity building programmes should begin with a detailed local needs' analysis and try to tackle the most pressing needs of the AMSs.
- b. Proportionality to the capacity of countries: Programmes tend to be most effective when they are designed based on the particular features of the FSN regulatory body.
- c. Involvement of other FSN regulatory bodies, international and regional entities and fora on FSN: The inclusion will help improve the quality or effectiveness of technical assistance.
- d. Programmes should be tailored to (and proportionate to) the level of FSN policy development of the beneficiaries, in order to facilitate the beneficiaries' capacity to assimilate new programmes and procedures.
- e. Continuity: So as not to lose impetus, follow through programmes are essential.

### **5.3. Different needs that could be met through technical assistance and capacity building programmes**

*The followings are some of the different needs that AMSs could consider:*

Improving the capacity to advocate to government officers and the general public on the benefits of FSN policy and foster a culture of FSN: For example, building capacity to conduct a detailed assessment of the net benefits that are likely to derive from a national FSN policy regime in conjunction with other existing policy instruments; providing advice on how FSN policy can help achieve other policy objectives and conducting effective outreach session targeting appropriate audience.

Building technical (legal and economic) skills necessary for the establishment and implementation of national FSN policy: for example, technical assistance to build skills in legislative drafting, formulating guidelines and resources needed to ensure FSN.

Developing a sound institutional framework and due processes for the FSN regulatory body e.g., technical assistance in building a reputation of independence and in identifying enforcement priorities.

Improving the FSN regulatory body's capacity to educate the public about the objectives and scope of FSN policy.

## **PART 6:     ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH**

### **6.1.     Achieving the objectives of FSN Policy**

AMSs may consider the use of advocacy and outreach as an effective means for achieving the objectives of FSN policy by educating the producers, farmers and regulators and hence, creating a culture of compliance. Effective use of such programmes can yield significant compliance and deterrence benefits and help FSN regulatory bodies determine the degree of priority of cases, and manage its enforcement costs.

Advocacy and outreach programmes can also engender support for the objectives of the FSN policy from stakeholders, e.g. researchers and other government agencies, academia, civil societies and consumers, and instill in the mind of the public a better understanding of the FSN policy.

AMSs may entrust the FSN regulatory body with the role of advising the Government or other public authorities on national needs and policies related to FSN matters. In particular, regulatory barriers to FSN resulting from economic and administrative regulation should be subjected to a transparent review process prior to its adoption, and assessed by the FSN regulatory body from a FSN perspective.

### **6.2.     Resources required for Advocacy and Outreach**

The AMSs could require the FSN regulatory body to have communications and outreach capacity combining the talents of specialist food security and nutrition, and economic staff with communications, marketing and media relations specialists to assist in the writing of guidelines, media releases and decisions. Such documents should be made publicly available, e.g., in pamphlets, websites, in order to garner maximum publicity and outreach.

### **6.3.     Compliance Programmes**

AMSs may consider encouraging different stakeholders to establish FSN compliance programmes. The compliance programme could be an integral part of the stakeholders' training programme.

## **PART 7:     REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

### **7.1.     Cooperation objectives**

The overarching objectives of a cooperative FSN policy arrangement for the AMSs are ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture.

### **7.2.     Benefits of cooperation**

The benefits of cooperation include: (i) Facilitating co-operation in the implementation of FSN policy in the ASEAN region, by allowing AMSs to share information on the benefits of introducing national FSN policy and establishing a FSN regulatory body and to promote best practices as this will assist those AMSs which are yet to introduce or implement FSN policy, in making informed choices on how to establish an effective national FSN policy regime; (ii) providing AMSs' FSN regulatory bodies with an avenue for maintaining regular contacts and addressing practical FSN concerns as this allows for a dynamic dialogue that serves to build consensus and convergence towards sound FSN policy principles across the ASEAN region; (iii) Building an effective legal framework to enforce FSN policy (iv) Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of national FSN regulatory bodies through the sharing and exchange of non-confidential information, knowledge and resources; and (v) Developing agreements on the basic elements of a common framework for national FSN policy within the ASEAN region.

### **7.3. Cooperation between FSN regulatory bodies**

The AMSs will endeavour to develop a regional platform or understanding or arrangement or build on the AFSRB to facilitate co-operation between FSN regulatory bodies.

As more AMSs establish national FSN policy and FSN regulatory body, they could be invited to participate in this cooperative arrangement. AMSs may consider developing protocols for the exchange of information between FSN regulatory bodies.

Within this regional platform, FSN regulatory bodies will be able to discuss FSN issues and promote a common approach. The regional platform will allow FSN regulatory bodies to exchange their experiences, identify best practices and endeavour to implement cooperative FSN policy and FSN regulatory body arrangements that provide for harmonisation.

The regional platform may facilitate working groups to discuss general issues or issues relating to certain sectors. In the framework of this platform, working groups may be created among AMSs' FSN regulatory bodies in order to discuss general or specific issues related to the establishment and enforcement of FSN policy. The working groups may work together by any agreed mode of communications (e.g., meetings, Internet, and video conference). Annual conferences and workshops may provide opportunities to discuss projects and their implications for FSN policy enforcement.

The regional platform should not exercise any rule-making function and no voting rules should be in place within the working groups, as the cooperation is based on consensus building. Where the platform reaches consensus on recommendations or "best practices", arising from the projects, each FSN regulatory body may decide whether and how to implement the recommendations, through unilateral, bilateral or multilateral arrangements, where appropriate.

**Table 1: Indicators for FSN at national and regional level**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Definition/explanation</b>
Nutritional Status	Percent underweight	Moderate and severe - below minus two standard deviations from median weight for age of reference population; severe-below minus three standard deviations from median weight for age or reference population
	Percent stunted	Moderate and severe - below minus for standard deviation from median height for age of reference population
	Percent wasted	Moderate and severe - below minus two standard deviations from median height of reference population
	Vitamin A deficit	Percentage of children aged 6-59 months who have received at least one high dose of vitamin A capsules in a certain year
	Percent of mothers with low body mass index (BMI)	Percent women whose BMI is less than 18.5, where BMI – an indicator of adult nutritional status – is defined as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters. In some countries, BMI is presented for all sample women, while in other countries the figure is available only for mothers of children under five years old.
Food intake	Calorie consumption	Average daily calorie intake – if possible disaggregated according to age, sex, stage in lifecycle
Health Status	Low birth weight	Percentage of children born with less than 2,500 grams
	Under five mortality rate	Probability of dying between birth and exactly one year of age expressed per 1,000 live births
	Infant mortality rate	Probability of birth and exactly one year of age expressed per 1,000 live births
	Prevalence of common diseases	Diarrhoea incidence < 5 per 1000: the number of children with diarrhoea per 1000 children in the target population. Diarrhoea is formally defined as 3 or more watery stools in 24 hours, but any episode diagnosed and/or treated as diarrhoea after an interview with the adult accompanying the child should be counted.  Others: Malaria, Measles, tuberculosis and etc.
	Immunization rate	Percent of surviving children age 12-23 months who received measles vaccine (line a), three doses of DPT and oral polio, and measles (line c); no vaccines at all (line d). the figures are a combination of information recorded on the child's vaccination card, or, in case where a card was not seen by the interviewer, as reported by mother

	Total Fertility Rate (TFR)	The average number of births a woman could expect to have during her lifetime if she follow observed levels of fertility for her age group at every age. The TFR is calculated as the sum of average annual age-specific fertility rate for all reproductive age groups (usually at least 13 and at most 50 years old) during the three years preceding the survey. For most countries, the TFR is based on the number of women of reproductive age in all marital statuses. For some countries, however, the TFR is calculated based on the sample of ever-married women and then extrapolated by DSH (Demographic and Health Survey) to women of all marital statuses for that country.
	Water supply and sanitation	Percent of household residents with safe water supply  Percent of household with latrine or toilet
Education	Adult literacy rate	Percentage of people aged 15 years and above who are literate
	Education level	Percentage of people in a given age group who have received a particular level of education
	Literacy rate	People age 20 year and more with no schooling or with some primary schooling are assumed to be illiterate. People with more schooling are therefore assumed to be literate
	Net Primary School enrolment/ attendance	Percentage of boys and girls enrolled at primary school as reported by UNESCO/UIS (UNESCO Institute of Statistics) and from the national household survey reports of attendance at primary school
Availability of Food	Population	Total number of people. Projected population figures are based on various projection models attempting to quantify the expected effects e.g of HIV/AIDS on population growth
	Annual Population Growth Rate	The rate at which the population is increasing or decreasing in a given year expressed as percentage of the base population size. It takes into consideration all the component of population growth, namely birth, dead and migration.
	Average household size	Average number of people living in each household where household is defined as a person, or a group of persons, who occupy a common dwelling (or part of it) for at least four days a week and who providing themselves jointly with food and other

		essentials for living. In other words, they live together as a unit. People who occupy the same dwelling, but who do not share food or other essentials, are enumerated as separate households.
	Food Production	<p>Climate indicator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rainfall (amount, distribution)</li> <li>- Temperature (Average, variations through the year)</li> <li>- Flood, drought</li> </ul> <p>Crop production and production system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- main crops (food, cash)</li> <li>- production system, etc</li> <li>- Food farm productivity</li> </ul> <p>Land &amp; soil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Soil quality (impoverishment, desertification)</li> <li>- Availability/Scarcity of land</li> <li>- Land availability for food production</li> </ul> <p>Input supply &amp; water availability &amp; support services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seed, tools, type and degree of mechanization</li> <li>- Irrigation/water</li> <li>- Extension services etc.</li> </ul> <p>Lever of farm production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quantity of production (MT)</li> <li>- Productivity of farm production (Quantity of farm produce/farm area) (MT/ha)</li> <li>- Productivity of farm production (number of farm workers/farm area OR Quantity of farm produce/number of farm workers)</li> </ul>
	Expenditure for food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total expenditure</li> <li>- Food expenditure</li> <li>- Share of expenditure on food</li> </ul>
	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of roads (km roads)</li> <li>- Availability of schools (number of school/habitants)</li> <li>- Health services (hospital beds, immunization rate, etc)</li> </ul>

Economic indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Markets (distance to local/regional market)</li> <li>- Etc</li> </ul>
	Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Type of goods at local/ regional markets</li> <li>- Prices for main food items</li> <li>- Price Fluctuation</li> <li>- Etc</li> </ul>
	Gross National Income (GNI) per capita	GNI is the sum of value added by all resident producers plus any product taxes (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output plus net receipts of primary income (compensation of employees and property income) from abroad. GNI per capita is gross national income divided by mid-year population. GNI per capita in US dollars is converted using the WB Atlas method
	Gross domestic Production (GDP) per capita	GDP is the sum of value added by all resident producers plus any product tax (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output. GDP per capita is gross domestic product divided by mid-year population. Growth is calculated from constant price GDP data in local currency
	% population below poverty line	The most commonly used way to measure poverty is based on income or consumption level. A person is considered poor if his or her consumption or income level fall below some minimum level necessary to meet basis need. This minimum level is usually called the “poverty line”. What is necessary to satisfy basic needs varies across time and societies. Therefore, poverty line vary in time and place, and each country uses lines which are appropriate to its level of development, societal norms and values. Percentage of population living on less than \$1.5 a day = poverty line
	Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)	PPP measure the relative purchasing power of currencies across countries
	Gini coefficient	The Gini coefficient is a measure of income inequality. It is a number between 0 and 1, where 0 means perfect equality (everyone have the same income) and 1 means perfect inequality (one person has all the income, everyone else earn nothing). While the Gini coefficient is mostly used to measure income inequality, it can be used to measure wealth inequality as well
	Social and political environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political stability</li> <li>- Migration rate</li> <li>- Conflict/rebellion</li> </ul>

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