SUN Member Advocacy Brief:
The Nutrition Policy Marker

WHAT IS THE NUTRITION POLICY MARKER?

Introduced in 2018, the nutrition policy marker (NPM) is a voluntary, qualitative reporting tool that identifies investments made with a nutrition objective or indicator within any sector. The policy marker tracks investments to projects with a nutrition objective or indicator over time. It does **not** quantify the value of investments to nutrition objectives or indicators in specific.

The NPM scoring system is consistent with all OECD policy markers and can be applied to both commitments and disbursements.

NPM Score	
2	Nutrition is the **principal objective** of the action and is fundamental in its design and expected results
1	Nutrition is an **important and deliberate objective**, but not the principal reason for undertaking the action
0	Action has been screened against the marker, but has not been found to target nutrition in any significant way

Per the OECD handbook for NPM users, a project is eligible for an NPM score if:
1. It is reported under the **basic nutrition purpose code**, OR
2. It contributes to a nutrition-sensitive outcome and the project documentation includes an **explicit nutrition objective or indicator**.

WHY IS THE NPM IMPORTANT TO END MALNUTRITION?

The NPM improves development partners' ability to mainstream nutrition within large-scale programs across sectors and optimize the use of resources to improve nutrition outcomes. It contributes to this goal in two ways:

First, the NPM enables donors to actively identify opportunities for **improved nutrition mainstreaming**. Reviewing a project for nutrition relevance during the design phase to assign the appropriate NPM score may reveal opportunities to incorporate nutrition objectives or indicators into projects that would otherwise not have them.

Second, the NPM enables donors, advocates, and other development partners to **track financing progress to improve transparency and accountability**. Because it can be applied to any investment across any sector, the NPM provides greater insight into multisectoral nutrition investments than previously available, and can therefore provide more transparent and accurate reports against financial and policy commitments.

The bottom line: More robust data will allow development partners to improve planning and coordination to tackle complex problems, better target and track investments in nutrition, and ultimately scale up more sustainable programs with effective nutrition actions across sectors to reduce the global burden of malnutrition.

WHY IS THE NPM A USEFUL RESOURCE TRACKING TOOL?

Four features make the NPM a useful resource tracking tool.

1. The NPM is most often **applied by project/program officers** who know the project best, instead of by a central data or statistics team.

2. The NPM is most often **applied at the beginning of a project**, instead of retroactively, meaning it can be a conversation starter about nutrition integration and inform design.

3. The **NPM data can be disaggregated by sector**, or any other field reported to the CRS, which improves transparency, granular information, and the ability to answer more complex questions about the nutrition financing landscape.

4. The **NPM data is reported to the publicly available OECD CRS database**, which means all data users can see which projects received NPM scores, greatly improving reporting transparency and accountability.

* These features are based on best practices for NPM application.

WHAT BENEFITS CAN INSTITUTIONS EXPERIENCE WHEN THEY ADOPT IT?

Adopting the NPM takes time, but when it is done correctly and consistently, it offers six unique benefits to development partners.

1. Accuracy	Because the NPM can be applied at the start of the project by the project/program officers themselves, it is more likely to be accurate.
2. Staff buy-in and sensitization	Since application is often done by project/program officers instead of a centralized data or statistics team, more staff are brought into the resource tracking process and therefore understand how the estimates are generated, what they're used for, and why they're important.
3. Nutrition mainstreaming	Since a project can be reviewed for the appropriate NPM score during design, the NPM can be an effective internal advocacy tool to promote increased nutrition mainstreaming through the inclusion of nutrition objectives and/or indicators that may not otherwise have been considered.
4. Better access to data when you need it	The resource tracking information is available significantly earlier than with retroactive application methods (e.g., 2013 SDN method) because the NPM score is visible the moment the programs are added to the internal reporting system(s). When it is integrated within internal systems, country offices can also access it to respond to requests from country governments.
5. Breaks down silos	Seeing nutrition investments across all sectors in the CRS allows organizations to assess trends and fluctuations beyond basic nutrition, bringing more nuance to the nutrition discussion and allowing users to tell a story across bureaus.
6. Demonstrate leadership	Commitment to this level of transparency, proactivity, and granular evidence generation demonstrates institutional leadership in data-driven programming.