

IYCF: A TOOL FOR ASSESSING NATIONAL PRACTICES, POLICIES & PROGRAMS

Pathway Component: caring capacity & practices; health care

Search Category: health & nutrition services; caring capacity, norms & practices

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Designer: World Health Organization

Contact Institution: publications@who.int

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CONTENT SUMMARY

Brief Description: This tool is designed to help assess the country-specific status of infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, policies, and programs. The purpose of an IYCF assessment is to identify strengths and possible weaknesses, to improve the protection, promotion, and support of optimal infant and young child feeding.

Uses: The tool will help provide assessment data that can assist planners and decision-makers in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their current policies and programs. This, in turn, will enable them to plan needed improvements.

Consideration should be given to using the tool every several years to track trends in various indicators, report progress, identify areas needing improvement, and assist planning processes.

Tool Components:

- Part One: Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices and Background Data
- Part Two: National Infant and Young Child Feeding Policies and Targets
- Part Three: National Infant and Young Child Feeding Program

OPERATIONS

Number of Staff Required: One individual should be responsible for coordination of the assessment team. The composition and size of the assessment team may vary depending on which organizations are represented in the assessment. It is recommended that representatives from the national government, NGOs, donor agencies, and advocacy groups be involved in a joint assessment. It is useful to have a core team of four to seven members who have primary responsibilities for data collection and are active throughout the entire process.

Time: The tool is designed to be flexible. It can be used in its entirety, which is preferred, or in part, and can be employed by a range of users for various purposes. The assessment will likely involve a series of working meetings and periods of data collection. The total time needed will vary depending on the data available and the number of staff dedicated to the assessment.

Cost of Assessment: As described above, the time and staff requirements will vary by assessment. As a result, the cost will also vary depending on the country and the depth of the assessment.

Training: It is expected that the core staff dedicated to the assessment will already be experts

in their field (e.g. Ministry of Health representatives or IYCF experts from NGOs). The working meetings can serve as an explanation of the process, but limited training will be required.

Geographic Targeting: The tool covers a country but suggests disaggregation between urban and rural areas wherever possible.

Type of Data Collection: This assessment will use multiple data sources that can include the Demographic and Health Survey, the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, and the WHO Global Data Bank on Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding. In some countries, recent national surveys may be of use. It is recommended that users identify local sources—including departments where national statistics and/or censuses are kept, DHS focal points, and WHO collaborating centers—at the start of the process.

Degree of Technical Difficulty: Questions in the tool relate to basic IYCF practices and are not technically complex. Difficulty may arise in finding, analyzing and using relevant data to design programs.

Complements other Resources: The tool can be used as a companion piece to the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding to help determine what improvements are necessary to meet the Global Strategy targets.