

HOW TO MAKE AFRICAN AGRI-FOOD VALUE CHAINS MORE GEARED TOWARDS NUTRITION OUTCOMES?

Nutrition Research Facility – August 2025

Despite the increase in food prices over 2024, the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet in the world fell from 2.76 billion in 2019 to 2.60 billion in 2024. To achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2, food systems must provide more nutritious food globally, requiring urgent transformation.

The complexity of factors influencing diets can make transformation seem daunting. **A value chain approach can be instrumental for creating equitable and sustainable food systems and improving health and nutrition outcomes.** However, traditional value chain analyses often overlook nutrition.

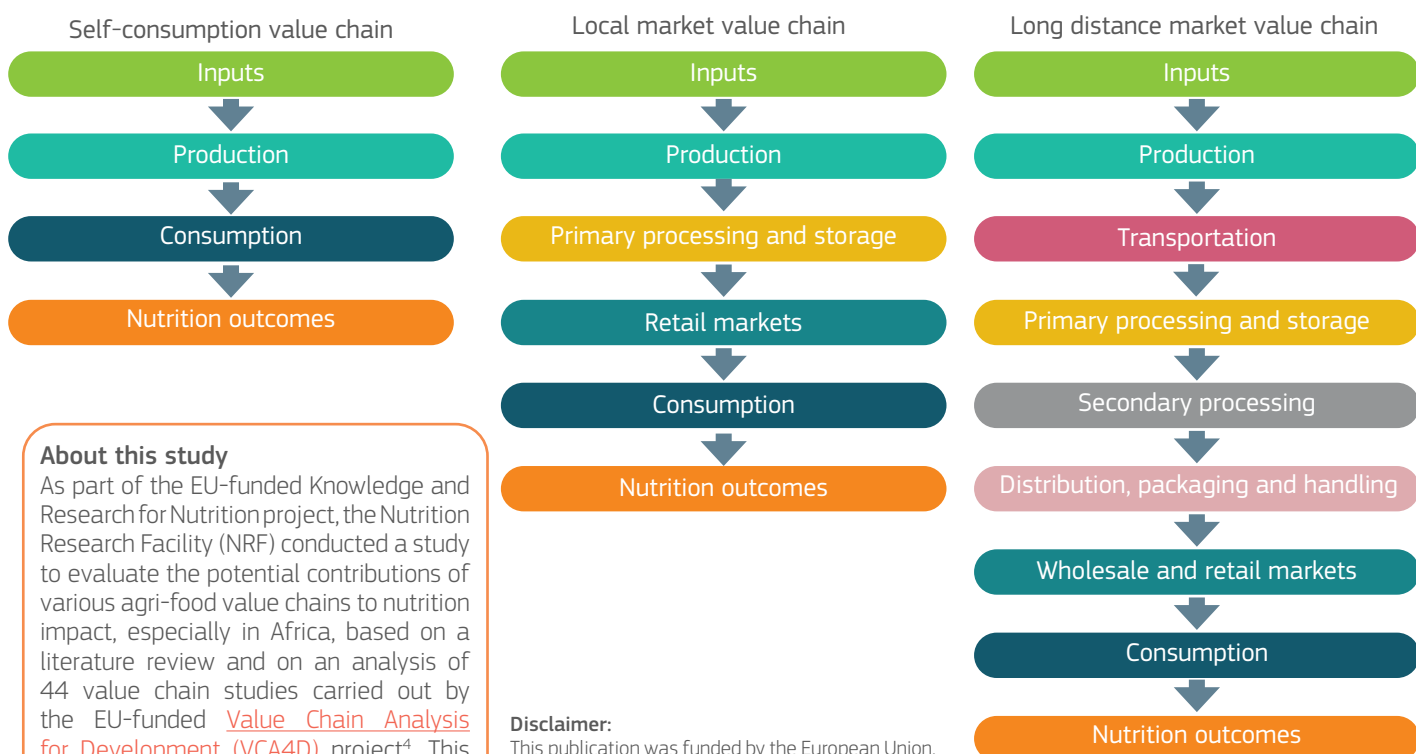
Value chains can contribute to nutrition outcomes through two main mechanisms: food availability (self-consumption and market access) and income



Different types of value chains contribute to nutrition outcomes in different ways

Self-consumption and local market value chains can enhance the availability of a variety of foods and nutrients for local populations

Local and distant markets value chains can create incomes and jobs, enhancing food access, and can increase the availability of a variety of foods and nutrients



About this study







As part of the EU-funded Knowledge and Research for Nutrition project, the Nutrition Research Facility (NRF) conducted a study to evaluate the potential contributions of various agri-food value chains to nutrition impact, especially in Africa, based on a literature review and on an analysis of 44 value chain studies carried out by the EU-funded [Value Chain Analysis for Development \(VCA4D\)](#) project⁴. This infographic highlights the main lessons learnt from this study. [More information](#)

Disclaimer:

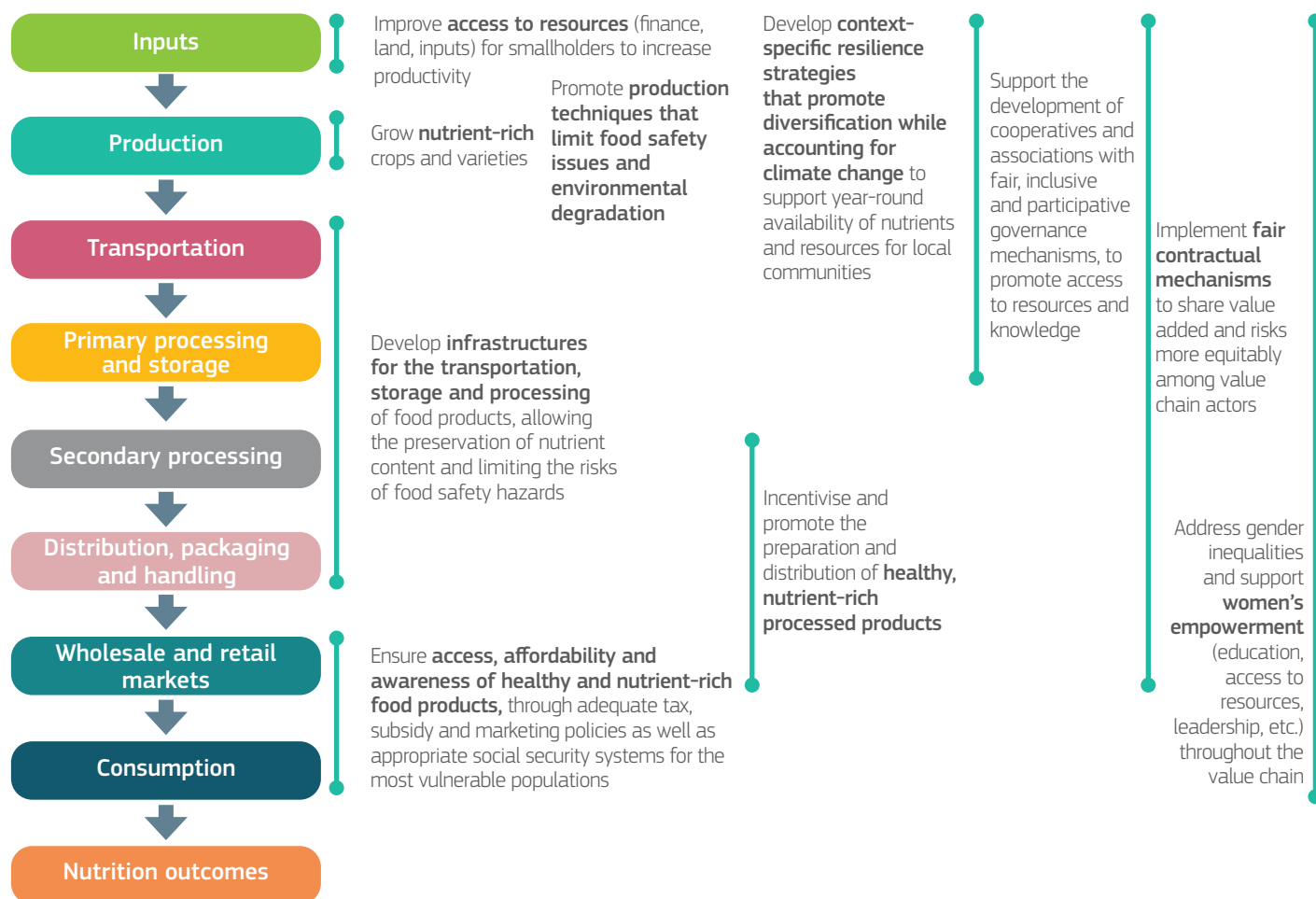
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The different types of value chains have specific nutritional benefits and challenges

All value chains can provide income for food purchase, not only cash crops. The difference with cash crop value chains is that, for this type of value chain, income generation is the main impact pathway to contribute to nutrition

Value chain type	Main nutritional benefits	Main challenges
 Fisheries and Aquaculture	Essential amino acids and fatty acids, vitamins D and B12	Threatened sustainability due to overfishing and pollution, conflicts of use about fishing rights
 Livestock and Animal Products	Essential amino acids, iron, zinc, vitamin B	Poor disease management and slaughtering practices, affecting food quality and safety
 Roots and Grains	Energy, fiber, vitamin B and minerals	Poor quality seeds, financial constraints, declining soil fertility
 Fruits and Vegetables	Vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and fiber	Aging plantations, vulnerability to pests and diseases, food safety issues in informal markets
 Pulses and Nuts	Essential fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins	Contamination with pesticides and aflatoxins, market fragmentation
 Cash Crops	Provide income for food purchase	Limited public support, inadequate training, market fluctuations

Enhancing the contribution of value chains to nutrition outcomes requires intentional design as well as comprehensive, context-specific approaches



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