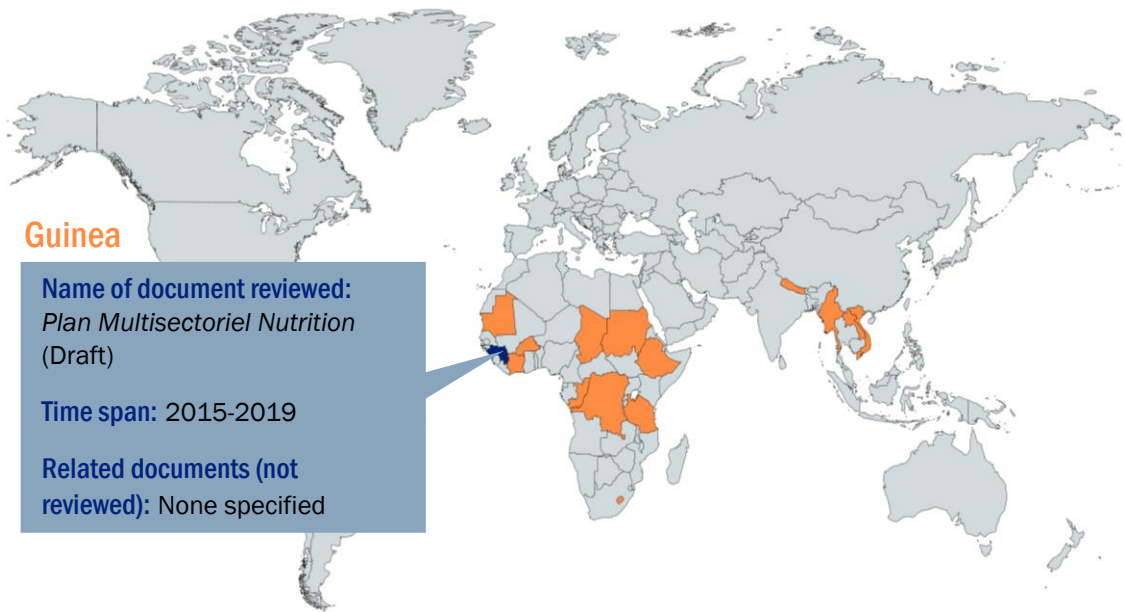


National Nutrition Plan Assessment: Guinea

In December 2016, the United Nations Network for the SUN Movement and the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS), with the support of an expert group, developed and launched the [Checklist on the Criteria and Characteristics of “Good” National Nutrition Plans](#) (“SUN Checklist”). In 2018, at the request of the SMS, the Maximising the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Plus (MQSUN+) project undertook a systematic assessment of the main planning document of 15 countries’ multisectoral national nutrition action plans, according to the criteria in the SUN Checklist. This brief summarises select strengths (✓) and suggested areas for improvement with recommendations (-) for Guinea, organised by each of the five areas in the SUN Checklist: (1) situational analysis and policy and programming review; (2) stakeholder engagement and high-level political commitment processes; (3) costs and budgetary framework; (4) implementation and managing arrangements; and (5) monitoring, evaluation, operational research and review. A section on gender considerations is also included.



Overview

Guinea’s *Plan Multisectoriel Nutrition 2015-2019* is the country’s first multisectoral nutrition plan since it joined the SUN Movement in 2013, and is currently in draft. It aims to eliminate undernutrition and malnutrition through actions spanning across four sectors (health, food security, education and water and sanitation) and six crosscutting areas (capacity building and national mobilisation; communication for development; development and application of standards and laws; national surveillance and early warning systems; applied research support and promotion; and partnerships with civil society and private sector).

Key strengths

Guinea's plan provides a good overview of the nutritional context in country, and includes detailed nutrition activities across all sectors. Below are a few key strengths that emerged from the review:

- ✓ Describes key nutritional outcomes among children and women of reproductive age. For some statistics, also highlights disparities by disaggregating programme coverage and malnutrition indicators by sex and region.
- ✓ Includes proposed actions that respond directly to the weaknesses identified in the plan's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. A number of the actions address financial sustainability bottlenecks (e.g. proposing a budget line for nutrition) and enforcement of regulations (e.g. creation of an agency for food inspection).
- ✓ Presents annual cost estimates by strategic area, which clearly include system-wide costs such as research, initiatives to improve information systems and capacity-building activities.
- ✓ Includes output and outcome indicators in the logframe for each action in the plan, with data sources, target populations and baseline numbers of beneficiaries.
- ✓ Devotes an entire strategic area to address nutrition emergency needs that include actions to improve nutrition surveillance and early warning systems.
- ✓ Contains several advocacy actions at both national and subnational levels, including advocacy for increased financial resources, training local elected officials/representatives to be effective nutrition advocates and promoting nutrition in public policies.

Key recommendations

Area 1: Situational analysis and policy and programming review

- While the plan contains general objectives in line with malnutrition prevention, it does not include specific targets towards achieving the overall goal of eliminating malnutrition.
 - **Recommendation:** Develop impact and outcome targets for indicators described in situational analysis (e.g. stunting, underweight, anaemia, vitamin A, and iodised salt coverage), using World Health Assembly nutrition targets as a guideline and modified according to the country context.
- The plan acknowledges risks to nutrition generally but does not explicitly describe efforts to mitigate them and does not describe risks to plan implementation itself.
 - **Recommendation:** Assess whether the actions proposed in the plan can address the threats of climate change, rural flight and degradation of ecosystems in mining areas mentioned in the plan, and modify as needed. For this and future iterations of the plan, conduct an assessment of risks to plan implementation, and build mitigation strategies into the actions to address these risks.
- The roles and responsibilities of the multisectoral steering committee, the coordination bodies at national-, regional- and prefectural-level and reporting and accountability structures are unclear.
 - **Recommendation:** Develop terms of reference for each group that outline committee composition, expectations, roles in annual planning and reporting mechanisms that illustrate how each group will interact with each other to ensure good progress and target achievements.

Area 2: Stakeholders' engagement and high-level political commitment process

- In its current form, the plan does not describe which parties were involved in the development of the plan or the process for high-level endorsement and commencement of implementation.
 - **Recommendation:** Through the plan development process, ensure active engagement of multisectoral stakeholders at national and subnational level. In the next iteration of the plan, incorporate a brief section describing the process of the plan's development and how stakeholders from different sectors were engaged and have committed to its implementation. This ensures transparency on the commitment of different sectors and stakeholders to the targets and holds them accountable for implementing actions to achieve the plan's goals.

Area 3: Costs and budgetary framework

- While the plan does include cost estimates for the main intervention areas, it does not provide information on the current levels of financing or an estimate of the financial gap.
 - **Recommendation:** Analyse national budget allocations and current external funding levels for nutrition activities included in the plan, and communicate the gap when advocating for resources. Since the plan identifies underfunding as a potential threat, develop strategies and issue guidance to national and subnational bodies on how to prioritise activities or particular high-burden regions using available data and transparent criteria.

Area 4: Implementation and management arrangements

- While the plan briefly describes the roles and responsibilities of various actors, it does not list the responsible parties for each planned action and detailed timelines for implementation.
 - **Recommendation:** Develop a matrix that states the lead and supporting organisations for each planned action and includes timelines for specific guidelines and annual operational planning.

Area 5: Monitoring, evaluation, operational research and review

- While the plan provides a description of the existing health information system, it provides limited details on the required roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the plan and how feedback loops will be used to make adjustments.
 - **Recommendation:** Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan that describes the process for collecting and reviewing information across all sectors included in the plan (not just for health). In addition, the next iteration of the main planning document should contain these basic elements (even if a more detailed monitoring and evaluation document is developed) so that the appropriate human and financial resources can be planned for as soon as the plan is approved.
- While the plan does include research as a strategic area, it does not describe how research priorities will be coordinated or how research findings will be disseminated.
 - **Recommendation:** Identify a research body that will work with the national nutrition plan's coordinating bodies to conduct further research on issues related to the plan's implementation.

Gender consideration

Beyond the SUN Checklist, all country plans were assessed with a gender lens for their consideration and inclusion of gender dimensions of nutrition. See supplemental [gender brief](#) for the specific factors that were considered.

While Guinea's plan briefly mentions the reduction of inequities, including gender, as one of its principles, there is an absence of details on how gender will be mainstreamed across planned actions. This could be strengthened through the following recommendations. It is acknowledged that some of this may have already been completed or documented in supplemental planning documents.

- **Situational analysis:** Data in the situational analysis should be sex- and age-disaggregated for nutrition-specific indicators and relevant nutrition-sensitive indicators to inform targeted and appropriate interventions. If not already done, a gender assessment could be conducted as part of an updated situational analysis to fully assess gender-related dimensions of nutrition in the Guinea context (e.g. exploring traditional gender roles/norms and how these may influence nutrition).
- **Planned actions:** Ensure relevant planned actions consider the unique circumstances of different populations based on the gender assessment, including actions that address underlying inequities and broader harmful gender norms, where possible. As well, establish mechanisms to assess and address the specific needs of men, women, boys and girls across planned actions.
- **Capacity building:** Capacity-building actions should include measures to encourage active participation of both men and women (and address any unique needs or potential barriers to participation). Capacity-building efforts should also broadly integrate gender discussions, where relevant, to address gaps in knowledge and action around gender-related needs and differences.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Selection of appropriate gender-related indicators should be based on Guinea's individual situational/gender analysis. Relevant data should also be disaggregated by sex and age, and there should be a documented plan for how sex-disaggregated data will be used to inform decision making. For nutrition-specific indicators, it is recommended that all should be sex-disaggregated, and disaggregation of nutrition-sensitive indicators should be determined based on the country context.

For future nutrition planning at both national and subnational level, the involvement of gender-experienced stakeholders (e.g. Ministry of Women's Affairs, gender representative CSOs, relevant UN agencies/international NGOs) and the discussion of gender norms and differences can strengthen the consideration of gender across nutrition actions.

Moving forward

These recommendations can be applied to either the ongoing implementation process for Guinea's national nutrition plan or to the next iteration of the plan once the time frame of the current plan comes to a close in 2019. Country stakeholders should refer back the [SUN Checklist](#) to consider other areas of improvement. For additional information on how closely this plan aligns with the SUN Checklist, please contact SMS or MQSUN+@path.org to request a full copy of the plan assessment.

MQSUN+ belongs to the Technical Assistance for Nutrition (TAN) programme with partners Nutrition International and the Emergency Nutrition Network to strengthen the capacity of the 60 countries within the SUN Movement to deliver policies and programmes which reduce malnutrition.

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