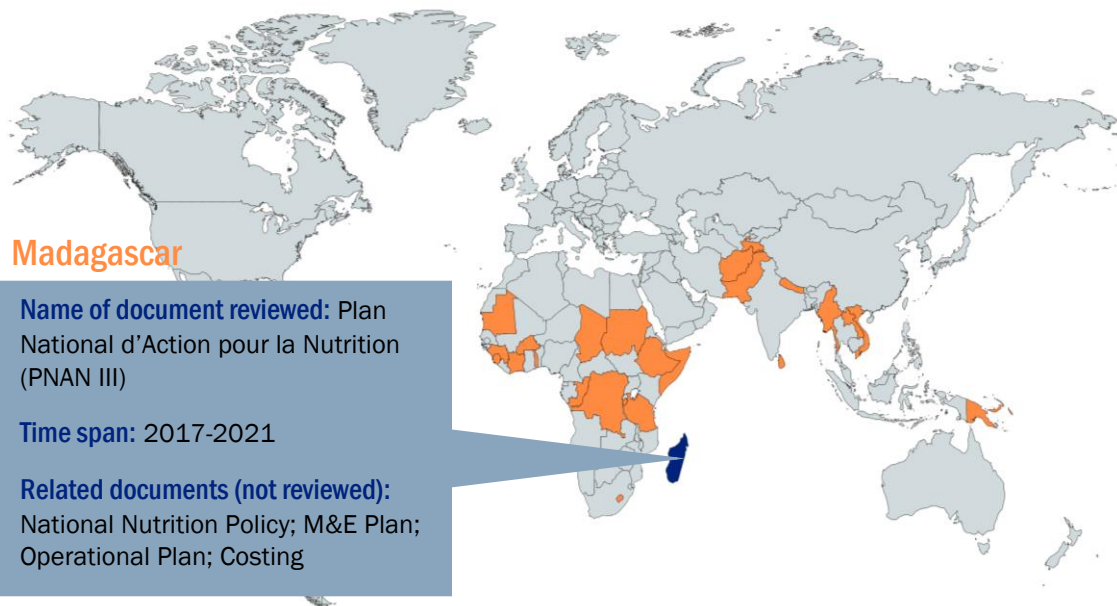


National Nutrition Plan Review: Madagascar

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 and 2020, at the request of the SMS, the Maximising the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Plus (MQSUN+) project undertook a systematic review of 26 countries’ multisectoral national nutrition plans, according to the criteria in the SUN Checklist. This brief summarises select strengths and suggested areas for improvement with recommendations for Madagascar, 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. Where relevant, specific suggestions for increasing gender sensitivity for the plan are also included (see MQSUN+’s [gender brief](#) for more information).



Overview

Madagascar’s *Plan National d’Action pour la Nutrition 2017-2021* (PNAN III) is the third iteration of the country’s multisectoral nutrition policy. The plan seeks to guide planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of interventions across sectors which are relevant to nutrition. The overall multisectoral nutrition plan comprises a number of related documents, including the main flagship document, an implementation plan and a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Key strengths

The plan underlines the Government of Madagascar's recognition of the importance of nutrition to the development of the country's human capital and wider sustainable social and economic development. Below are a few key strengths that emerged from the review:

- Provides a good description of causal factors of undernutrition, particularly stunting.
- Outlines current and future efforts across relevant sectors to address malnutrition in its various forms.
- Provides a good analysis of risks, highlighting the presumed conditions under which the plan is envisioned to succeed and potential risks as well as learning from previous iterations of the plans.
- Outlines a thorough operational framework, including a range of evidence-based interventions and description of implementation mechanisms and indicators for annual, mid-term and final evaluations planned.

Key recommendations

Area 1: Situational analysis and policy and programming review

- The description of population nutritional status focuses mainly on children under 5 years of age with limited discussion concerning other groups such as adolescent girls and women of reproductive age. Additionally, the situational analysis does not discuss broader cultural and societal gender norms, roles and relations that may influence nutrition.
 - **Recommendation:** To facilitate prioritisation and improve targeting of interventions, ensure the use of disaggregated data for decision making, and if not already done, consider conducting further assessment of nutritional status by sex, region, ethnic group, urban/rural and/or other groups suspected to be vulnerable in the country to facilitate future planning. In the next iteration of the plan, consider including a broader assessment of the nutritional status and determinants amongst other population groups, particularly adolescent girls and women of reproductive age, including considering broader gender and equity issues that may affect planned actions.
- Whilst plan targets include most of the World Health Assembly (WHA) nutrition indicators and are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), the plan does not include any target to reduce anaemia amongst women of reproductive age (despite a specific goal to reduce anaemia in pregnant women) and some targets are not fully aligned with WHA nutrition targets.
 - **Recommendation:** As the current plan will come to an end next year (2021), review current targets and further align them with WHA global targets, as feasible and relevant. It is recommended to include a target on reduction of anaemia amongst women of reproductive age in the next iteration of the plan.
- Although the plan lists a number of risks to plan implementation, it does not recommend a mitigation strategy for all of the risks.
 - **Recommendation:** Revisit the enumerated risks to implementation and develop strategies with clear lead and supporting agencies to address them during annual operational planning.

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

- Whilst the plan does include a description of the plan development, it does not indicate the range and types of stakeholders involved in the process.
 - **Recommendation:** In future iterations of the plan, consider documenting the stakeholders engaged at different stages of the process to ensure transparency on the commitment of different sectors and stakeholders to the targets and facilitate accountability for implementing actions to achieve the plan's goals.

Area 3: Costs and budgetary framework

- The plan lacks estimates of the cost of the proposed activities and existing levels of financing; however, it is expected that this was completed following the development of the operational plan.
 - **Recommendation:** Undertake a costing exercise for all activities within the plan and summarise the overall budget, currently available funding and identify funding gaps through a financial gap analysis.
- The plan has no description provided of how funding for the plan will be tracked over time (beyond a financial audit of external resources) or criteria that the steering committee will use to manage funds and approve annual work plans.
 - **Recommendation:** Review existing sectoral financial tracking mechanisms, and if a sufficient tracking system is not already in place, assess the feasibility of adapting or developing a financial tracking system that includes both on-budget and off-budget funding for planned activities, as well as allocations and expenditures to make disbursement decisions more transparent; and in the case of financial shortfalls, develop transparent criteria for prioritising interventions, programmes and/or target groups.

Area 4: Implementation and management arrangements

- Whilst strengthening capacity of the national coordinating body is a noted action there is little other detail provided in the plan on where capacities need to be strengthened.
 - **Recommendation:** With the current plan coming to a close in another year, consider undertaking a capacity assessment to identify capacity gaps for informing the next iteration of the plan. In the next plan, outline appropriate steps towards building functional, managerial and technical capacities within and across relevant sectors. In addition, consider identifying unique needs or potential barriers to equitable participation amongst men and women and incorporating measures to address these considerations in capacity-building actions.

Area 5: Monitoring, evaluation (M&E), operational research and review

- Whilst there is a list of target indicators for each strategic objective and intervention, the sources from which these data will be collected are only vaguely described, with no explanation provided on how data quality issues and gaps will be identified and addressed or what steps will be taken to build M&E capacity.
 - **Recommendation:** Where target indicators are included, ensure that the M&E plan includes the proposed source for these indicators, and if not already identified, for the next iteration of the plan develop actions or mechanisms to address data quality and gaps and develop M&E capacity more

generally. If data gaps include key indicators disaggregated by sex, also consider incorporating steps to update data collection tools and monitoring systems to add this information.

- The plan does not describe operational research priorities or include any reference to planned operational research.

→ **Recommendation:** If not already indicated in the corresponding M&E plan, for the next iteration of the plan, identify relevant state and/or non-state research organisations to assist in developing a set of priority operational research questions arising from the M&E of the plan and coordinating operational research efforts.

Moving forward

With Madagascar's current national nutrition plan drawing to a close in 2021, most of these recommendations can inform planning for the next iteration of the plan. Most immediately, consider conducting a nutrition capacity assessment to ensure those needs and actions are reflected in the next plan, update/expand the nutrition situation analysis as indicated to inform planned actions and ensure any new plan incorporates appropriate process and outcome indicators with clearly defined data collection and flows. For additional information on how closely this plan aligns with the SUN Checklist, please contact SMS to request a full copy of the plan review.

For more practical guidance on multisectoral nutrition planning, see the resources included in the [SUN Checklist](#) and refer to the [forthcoming multisectoral nutrition planning toolkit from MQSUN+](#).

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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