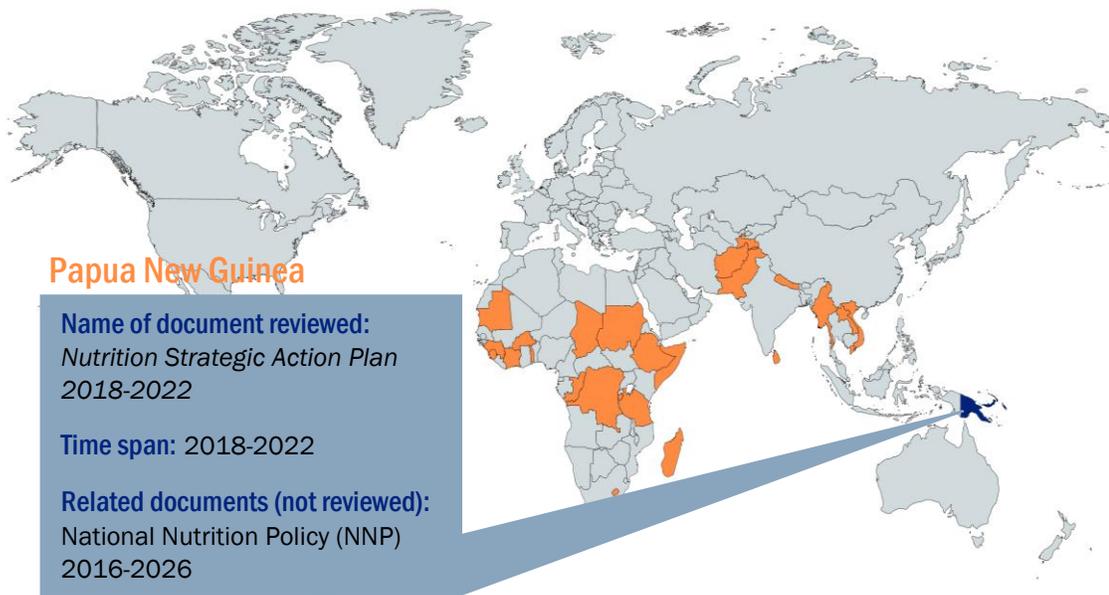


National Nutrition Plan Review: Papua New Guinea

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 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 Papua New 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. Where relevant, specific suggestions for increasing gender sensitivity for the plan are also included (see MQSUN+’s [gender brief](#) for more information).



Overview

To reduce stunting and the other forms of malnutrition and their associated effects, the government of Papua New Guinea developed a five-year *Nutrition Strategic Action Plan 2018-2022*. The plan was developed to operationalise relevant strategies outlined within the multisectoral National Nutrition Policy 2016-2026. The goal of the *Nutrition Strategic Action Plan 2018-2022* is to improve the nutrition situation for all Papua New Guineans, through evidence-based, well-coordinated nutrition approaches that optimise resources and align actions. At the time of review, the document was in draft form.

Key strengths

The plan highlights the commitment of the government of Papua New Guinea to galvanise efforts amongst relevant sectors and increase commitment and allocation of resources and expertise towards high-impact programmes to improve the nutrition situation in the country. Some of the key strengths are that the plan:

- Provides a concise description of alignment with policies in other sectors, clearly identifying gaps and priority areas for improvement.
- Demonstrates a commitment to gender equality by discussing the gender dimensions of nutrition in its situational analysis, including gender as a key principle of the plan, and including actions that promote women's economic empowerment.
- Lists priority actions that provide a good level of detail, are clearly laid out and follow a clear logic based on a theory of change and that reflect the determinants outlined in the situational analysis.
- Elaborates on governance mechanisms for management, reporting and accountability, and commits to the engagement of a wide variety of stakeholders, including details on subnational, local-level stakeholders and communities.
- Includes a thorough capacity development plan which encompasses university-level education through to in-service training of programme staff and community-level social and behaviour change communication.
- Provides a good assessment of potential risks to the plan and well-considered associated mitigation strategies, and incorporates a thorough set of emergency nutrition actions, including integration within wider governance systems and capacity development.

Key recommendations

Area 1: Situational analysis and policy and programming review

- Whilst the situational analysis is comprehensive, it is based on outdated nutrition indicator data and, as such analysis of trends is also lacking.
 - **Recommendation:** It is noted in the plan that the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data was anticipated in early 2018. If not already done, utilise the most recent DHS to update the situational analysis with disaggregation and analysis of trends over time to set discrete targets for key nutritional indicators and identify vulnerable groups. Where available, assess nutritional outcomes by sex to assess potential inequities.
- Although 'gender equality and equity' is one of the plan's guiding principles, there is no clear indication as to how this will be promoted in practice across planned interventions. The plan also lacks specific interventions aimed at addressing underlying issues noted in the situational analysis (e.g. related to gender-based violence, lack of women represented in decision making, etc).
 - **Recommendation:** Consider a mechanism or responsible entity to support addressing equitable participation of women, men, boys and girls across activities (as relevant) and mitigation of unintended consequences or potential inequities that may arise from existing gender norms. Drawing from other country plans, this could potentially be supported through including a gender focal point in the plan's multisectoral coordination groups or assign the Ministry of Women/Gender

to support the incorporation of gender consideration across all nutrition-sensitive activities. Where possible, actions that address underlying inequities and broader harmful gender norms should also be integrated.

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

- The plan does not indicate high-level political endorsement or endorsement from relevant sectors and subnational actors, such as local authorities. Given the plan's start year is 2018, it is assumed this has taken place but is not formally documented in the plan.

→ **Recommendation:** In future iterations of the plan, or if not already achieved, facilitate validation of the plan and ensure that the front page is signed by a high-level government representative and, if possible, include high-level signatories from across represented sectors to formally document the commitment of the various sectors and the highest level of government.

Area 3: Costs and budgetary framework

- Although the costed activities are presented in the plan, the costing methodology and what is included within specific activity costs are not clear. Further, as noted in the plan, costs of existing activities already costed by sectors are not included, which prevents the ability to provide a true cost picture of addressing malnutrition in the country through this plan.

→ **Recommendation:** In future iterations of the plan, consider including a short description of the costing methodology used and further detail what is included within cost estimates. It may also be beneficial to indicate the costs of activities already included in sector budgets within the costing so that the full cost of the plan and proportion already budgeted can be appreciated.

- The plan does not indicate if a planned or existing mechanism is in place for tracking financial expenditures over the course of implementation.

→ **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 include an indicator for government spending on nutrition.

Area 4: Implementation and management arrangements

- Capacity development is noted as a core strategy of the plan, and a number of actions to address capacity, including a capacity assessment, are indicated; however, the effectiveness of the proposed actions could be improved by considering gender-related dynamics and actively addressing any barriers to participation.

→ **Recommendation:** Ensure that capacity-building measures encourage and enable active participation of both men and women, and address any unique needs or potential barriers to participation. Capacity-building interventions at all levels should integrate gender considerations to address gaps in knowledge and action around gender-related needs and differences.

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

- Due to the lack of recent baseline data, the plan does not include firm nutrition targets, although it is indicated that these were to be added in early 2018 by the M&E working group.

→ **Recommendation:** If not already done, develop a more in-depth M&E plan to be able to be fully utilised as a planning document. Such a plan should include clear numerical targets for relevant nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive indicators and outline how evaluation and review process will feed into the identification of corrective measures and financial adjustments, building upon existing M&E and review mechanisms. Where possible, information should also be disaggregated by sex and age so as to track and assess gender equity in implementation.

- The plan does not provide information about how data derived from the M&E system will be disseminated and shared with invested stakeholders, such as communities, civil society, local authorities and development partners.

→ **Recommendation:** Consider establishing mechanisms for the timely dissemination of data and information, including feedback loops to the subnational level and communities.

Moving forward

These recommendations can be considered and applied to either the ongoing implementation process for Papua New Guinea national nutrition plan, as relevant and feasible, or to the next iteration of the plan once the time frame of the current plan comes to a close in 2022. Immediate priorities of focus could be to follow through with more detailed plans on M&E, capacity assessment, advocacy and communication and prioritisation of activities, including detailed target and goal setting utilising updated data and relevant nutrition indicators. 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.

For more information about MQSUN+

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