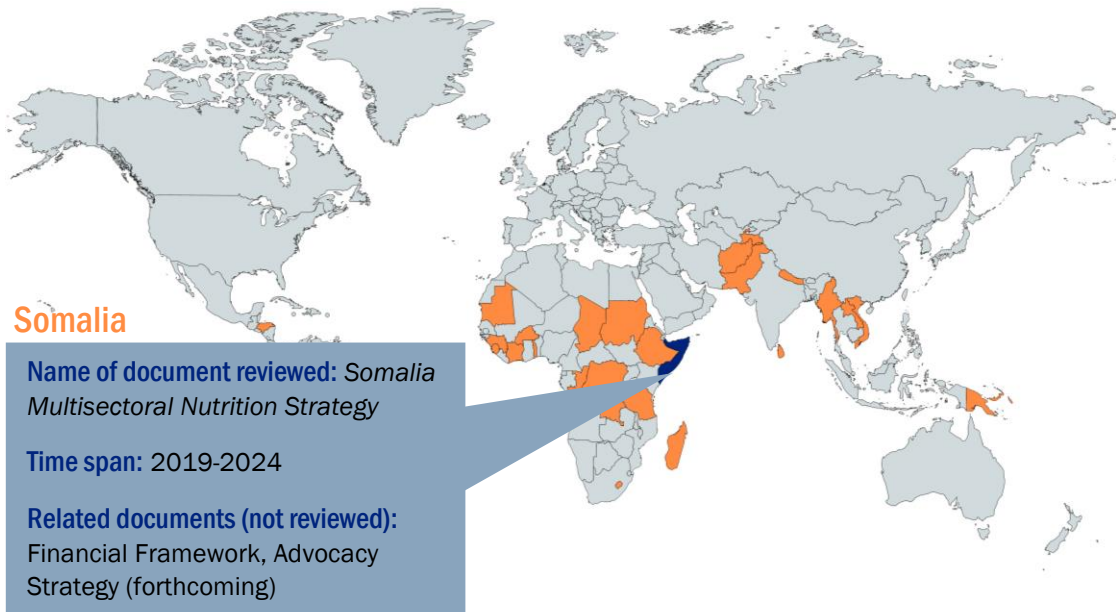


National Nutrition Plan Review: **Somalia**

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 Somalia, 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

The *Somalia Multisectoral Nutrition Strategy (2019-2024)* builds on the previous *Somalia Nutrition Strategy (2011-2013)* and represents the country's first multisectoral plan to tackle malnutrition through a consolidated, multisectoral approach by aligning all nutrition relevant policies and eliminating fragmentation of policies. Proposed activities are organised along seven strategic objectives: (1) enabling policy and legal environment for nutrition; (2) multisectoral nutrition coordination; (3) human resource capacity; (4) nutrition-specific interventions; (5) nutrition-sensitive interventions; (6) gender and sociocultural factors; and (7) organisational, institutional and humanitarian relief.

Key strengths

The plan is anchored under the government of Somalia's priority areas and roadmap on social development and builds on various existing policies relating to nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive action. Below are a few key strengths that emerged from the review:

- Demonstrates a clear high-level political commitment to the plan.
- Provides a clear description of the nutrition context in the country, including underlying determinants and the influence of gender norms and roles on nutrition.
- Clearly describes priority actions by which the goal and targets of the plan will be achieved—addressing a wide range of bottlenecks and including a number of interventions aimed at addressing the negative effects of gender norms on nutrition.
- Outlines a comprehensive risk analysis/risk mitigation strategy with some context-specific analysis.
- Includes costing information for all proposed activities.
- Describes M&E system's data sources and collection methods, measures to strengthen routine and survey nutrition information systems, and types of analyses planned; in addition, specifically notes that data will be disaggregated by sex.

Key recommendations

Area 1: Situational analysis and policy and programming review

- The situation analysis provides a descriptive overview of trends and rates of undernutrition in children under 5 and women of reproductive age; however, there is little disaggregation of nutrition-related data (e.g. by gender, urban/rural, socioeconomic status, ethnicity). In addition, certain equity issues described in the situation analysis (e.g. marginalisation and vulnerability due to the clan system and violence against women) are not explicitly addressed in the planned actions and targeting.
 - **Recommendation:** If not already done, conduct further assessment of nutritional status by gender, region, ethnic group, urban/rural and/or other groups suspected to be vulnerable in the country to inform targeting of interventions or the design of specific interventions, where feasible, to mitigate underlying inequities.
- Although wasting is noted as a persistent problem and related indicators, such as coverage and screening, are mentioned in the CRF, the plan lacks a specific target to reduce wasting.
 - **Recommendation:** Add a target on the reduction of childhood wasting to less than 5%, and consider adding other World Health Assembly nutrition-related targets, such as reducing anaemia in women of reproductive age by 50% and reducing low birth weight by 30%.
- Although the risk mitigation plan seems to have been developed systematically, it does not assign responsibilities for each specific mitigation strategy.
 - **Recommendation:** Review risk mitigation strategies and add lead and supporting stakeholders for each action, referencing and/or adding to the interventions under the Strategic Objectives, as needed.

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

- While the plan includes a list of stakeholders involved and consulted, it does not elaborate on how stakeholders were involved in plan development and at which stages.
 - **Recommendation:** In future iterations of the plans, include a brief section describing who was involved in the development of the plan and how that engagement was facilitated. 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 financial analysis highlighted a shortfall of existing funding for the planned actions, the plan itself does not outline the process for determining spending priorities.
 - **Recommendation:** Develop a plan for mobilising additional funding both to sustain or increase commitments from development partners aligned to the plan's priorities and to increase government nutrition commitments. This could be considered as part of the noted forthcoming Social Mobilisation, Advocacy and Communications Strategy. Also, issue guidance for the prioritisation of interventions and/or populations in the event of funding shortfall—using available data and transparent criteria—to inform implementation planning.

Area 4: Implementation and management arrangements

- While the CRF does indicate 'support' agencies for each output, the plan does not specify the lead and supporting organisations responsible for implementing each proposed activity.
 - **Recommendation:** In the forthcoming planning, clearly document the lead and supporting agencies (both governmental and nongovernmental) for each of the proposed actions and ensure timelines for national/subnational planning are clear and feasible.
- The plan highlights key capacity gaps at different levels and outlines the need for a full capacity assessment to inform a capacity development strategy; however, there is no specific indication of ensuring gender and broader equity are considered and incorporated as part of this strategy.
 - **Recommendation:** During the formation of the capacity assessment and capacity development strategy, include measures to encourage active participation of men and women (addressing any potential barriers to participation), and incorporate gender and broader equity discussions across capacity-strengthening activities—potentially drawing from the identified inequities highlighted in the situational analysis.

Area 5: Monitoring, evaluation, operational research and review

- The plan includes a section on programme learning to be further elaborated in national and subnational implementation plans, including operations research as a key aspect. However, no operational details are provided on how to implement it.
 - **Recommendation:** As part of further implementation planning—and in conjunction with developing the terms of reference for the plan coordinating bodies at national and/or regional level—determine operations research priorities, how operations research priorities will be coordinated vis-à-vis government and research institutions, develop milestones and timeframes for setting up the research and ensure that lessons learned/best practices from the studies are appropriately disseminated to stakeholders.

Moving forward

These recommendations can be considered and applied to the ongoing implementation planning process for Somalia's national nutrition plan, as relevant and feasible. Immediate priorities of focus could be to ensure clear roles and responsibilities are defined at national and subnational levels across planned actions to guide implementation, and mobilise efforts to increase funding commitments for the plan and/or prioritise based on the funding scenario. 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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