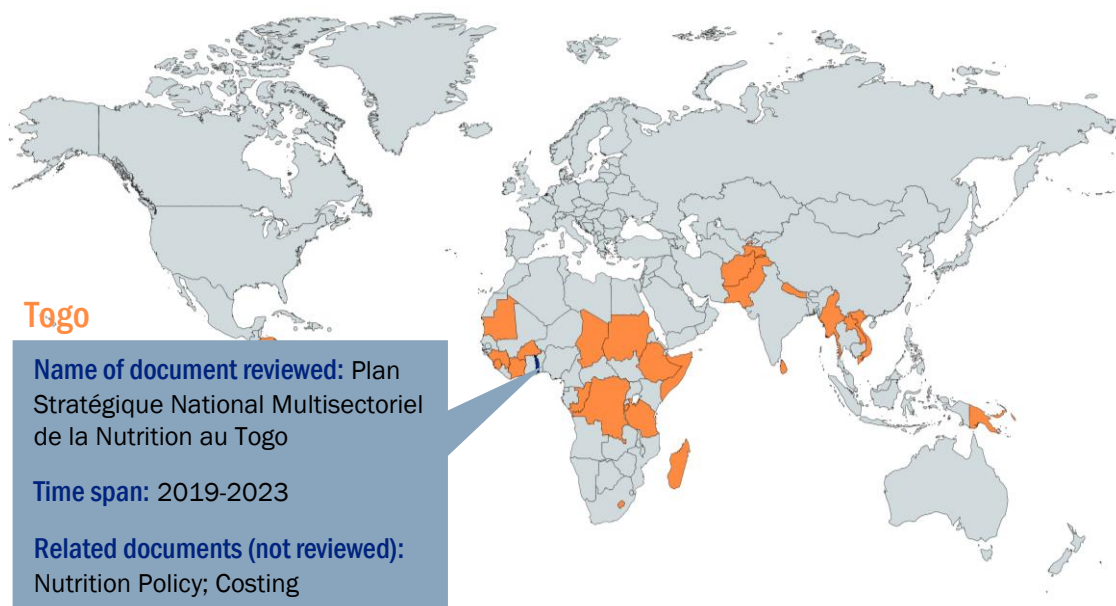


National Nutrition Plan Review: Togo

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 Togo, 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

Togo’s *Plan Stratégique National Multisectoriel de la Nutrition au Togo 2019-2023*, builds on the country’s national strategic plan for food and nutrition (2012–2015) and represents Togo’s first plan to incorporate all sectors that have been identified to have an impact on nutrition, in recognition that the causes of malnutrition are complex and multifactorial and that effective actions require the convergence and synergy of efforts from all the concerned sectors. The plan is centred on a set of sectoral objectives contributing to ambitious targets for improving the nutritional status of the population. The plan was still in draft form when it was reviewed.

Key strengths

Togo's plan is a testament to the country's strong political will to accelerate and implement interventions to combat malnutrition aimed at reaching global nutrition targets and eliminating hunger in the country. Below are a few key strengths that emerged from the review:

- Includes a good situational analysis, including disaggregation of key nutrition indicators by sex and a discussion of the effects of gender norms on nutrition. Gender considerations are also included as a crosscutting issue throughout the plan.
- Incorporates expected results that contribute to all six World Health Assembly nutrition-related targets as well as additional non-communicable disease reductions, such as raised blood pressure and diabetes.
- Highlights planned actions that are clear, respond directly to issues discussed in the situational analysis, and have SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) indicators associated with them.
- Includes a thorough description of the process of plan development and good integration throughout of linkages between the subnational and national levels, including in plan development, coordination and implementation planning.

Key recommendations

Area 1: Situational analysis and policy and programming review

- The plan has not yet defined the multisectoral platform responsible for coordinating the plan's actions, although it is included as an action within the plan itself.
- **Recommendation:** Ensure that the forthcoming decree that sets forth the coordinating bodies for the plan includes clear roles, responsibilities and timelines at both national and subnational level, and outlines how the bodies at each level will interact with each other.

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

- Although the plan clearly identifies the engagement of multiple sectors, and its preface is attributed to the Minister of Planning, Development and Cooperation, it does not appear to have been endorsed yet or signed by these high-level stakeholders.
- **Recommendation:** 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 at the highest level of government.
- Whilst the plan does include actions around engaging partners and community participation to promote implementation, it does not describe specific advocacy and communication plans to mobilise influential stakeholders to champion nutrition and promote stakeholder engagement.
- **Recommendation:** Consider promoting actions or developing a corresponding advocacy and communications strategy to facilitate stakeholder engagement and commitment to plan implementation at all levels. Based on the specific identified advocacy needs, this could broadly include actions to advocate for the plan amongst public figures at multiple levels (e.g. national-

level politicians, community leaders) to build nutrition champions and to advocate/orient national stakeholders on plan implementation.

Area 3: Costs and budgetary framework

- The reviewed plan did not contain cost estimates; however, the reviewers are aware that MQSUN+ recently undertook a costing and financial gap analysis of the planned activities (not included or assessed as part of this review).

→ **Recommendation:** Based on the recent costing and financial gap analysis exercise, ensure a plan is in place to advocate for the outstanding funds and develop criteria for prioritising target groups, geographic areas and/or interventions based on the available financial resources. The development of a financial framework to accompany the plan (or be integrated within the plan, if feasible) would be beneficial to summarise cost estimates, the financial gap and describe planned mechanisms for tracking financial expenditures over the course of implementation.

Area 4: Implementation and management arrangements

- The plan indicates that regional- and community-level committees will be in place, but it does not clearly specify arrangements or mechanisms by which different actors will work together to jointly target interventions to efficiently use resources, consult with local actors or provide mutual accountability for stakeholders to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

→ **Recommendation:** Examine existing subnational multisectoral coordination mechanisms that could be built on/adapted to coordinate the plan's implementation, and ensure a plan is in place to facilitate coordinated action and mutual accountability.

- The plan does not appear to include or draw upon a capacity needs assessment and, whilst capacity-building activities are included in response to issues identified in the situational analysis, there is no clear overall framework or plan for capacity development.

→ **Recommendation:** Assess existing capacities and gaps to deliver the plan, and develop a related plan for capacity strengthening, including clearly defined milestones, timeframes, resources and funding sources and outlining roles and responsibilities of government, civil society, national academic institutions, private sector actors and communities. Capacity-building plans should include measures to encourage active participation of both men and women, address any unique needs or potential barriers to participation and, where relevant, integrate gender discussions to address gaps in knowledge and action around gender-related needs and differences.

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

- The plan does not provide a detailed description of a coordination mechanism for M&E activities and does not specify how stakeholders will be engaged in periodic reviews of plan performance.

→ **Recommendation:** Establish a defined coordination structure and mechanism for M&E of the plan (including outlining roles and responsibilities of government and partners), and outline the types of data analysis, evaluation and data quality assurance to be conducted. Additionally, develop a multi-stakeholder review process for the plan that includes guidance for the assessment of sector or programme performance against defined goals, allows for feedback to identify corrective measures and financial adjustments and builds on existing reviews within sectors. These details could be further defined and elaborated through the development of a corresponding M&E plan.

- Whilst the plan includes operational research as a specified activity and discusses the importance of research findings influencing programme implementation, it is less clear on roles and responsibilities for coordinating, planning and implementing research.
 - **Recommendation:** Identify a research lead (preferably including academic institutions, if possible) that will work with the plan's coordinating bodies to identify priorities and oversee operational research throughout the plan's implementation.

Moving forward

These recommendations can be considered and applied to the ongoing implementation planning/process for Togo's national nutrition plan, as feasible and relevant. Immediate priorities of focus could be to ensure the plan is endorsed and signed by all sectors and at the highest level of government and ensure the governing and coordination mechanisms at national and subnational levels are formally defined. 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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