

Technical assistance to develop a common results framework for nutrition in Tajikistan

MQSUN+ retrospective case study (March 2018)



This retrospective case study is part of a brief series on [Assumption maps to assess signs of impact of short-term technical assistance](#).

The Government of Tajikistan joined the global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement in September 2013. Despite improvements over the last decade, undernutrition remains a significant public health problem. The 2017 Demographic and Health Survey found 17 percent of children under 5 years old to be stunted and 42 percent to be anemic. The SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS) requested that Maximising the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Plus (MQSUN+) help Tajikistan facilitate a consultative process to develop a common results framework (CRF) with a costed action plan for nutrition.

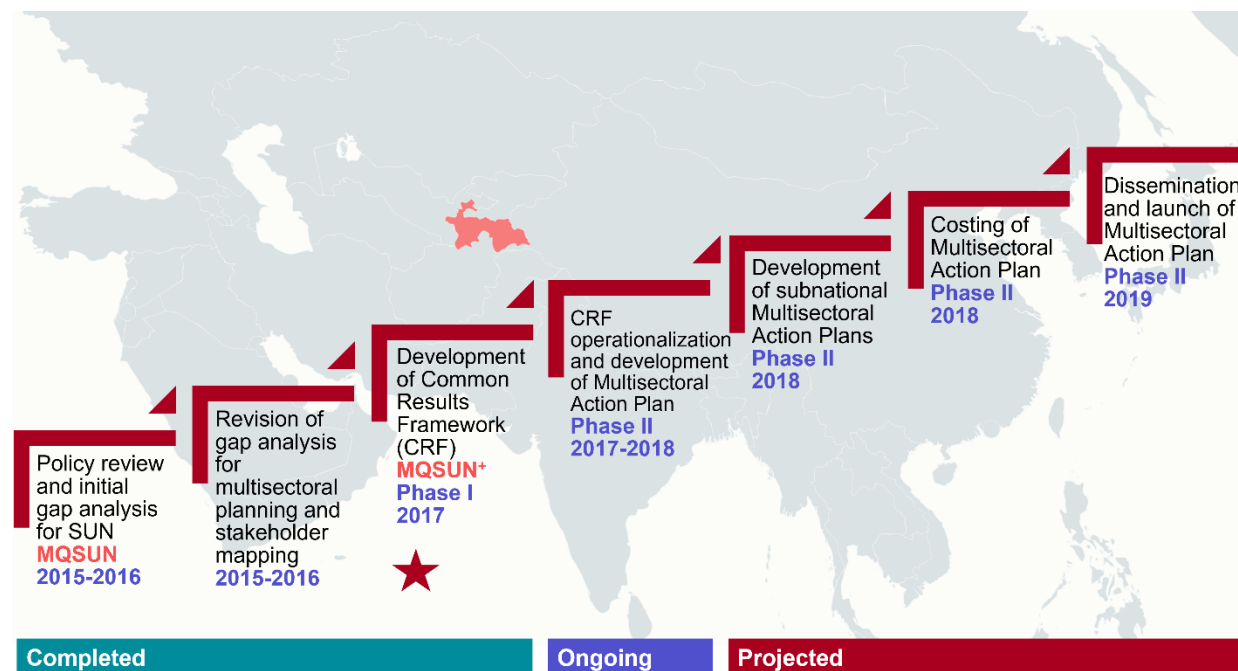
Technical assistance implementation

MQSUN/MQSUN+ provided phased support towards launching a multisectoral nutrition action plan to facilitate progress towards the [Technical Assistance for Nutrition \(TAN\)](#) goal (improved coverage of multisectoral nutrition programs) and the reduction of malnutrition in Tajikistan. It supported reviewing and aligning policies and programs (contextual analysis)—including recommendations to strengthen the convening power of the multisectoral scaling up nutrition platform, aligning and developing a CRF, and strengthening nutrition information systems. As well, it aimed to continue progress towards the TAN goal by:

- Ensuring the full involvement and ownership of key stakeholders and partners (multi-stakeholder mapping and engagement).
- Establishing relevance, practicality, measurability, and achievability of the CRF goal, objectives, activities, and indicators (CRF development).
- Reviewing whether the CRF is ready to be costed (costing readiness assessment).

Figure 1 highlights the MQSUN/MQSUN+ TA, including completed progress and planned next steps.^a

Figure 1. MQSUN/MQSUN+ technical assistance pathway to improved multisectoral action in Tajikistan.



Abbreviations: CRF, common results framework; MQSUN+, Maximising the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Plus; SUN, Scaling Up Nutrition.

Assumption pathway to impact

MQSUN+ theorizes that bringing together stakeholders in a common platform can help obtain agreement on common goals for nutrition (through a CRF), which provides direction to develop a costed multisectoral nutrition plan of action (MSNP) that can be rolled out at the national and subnational level. The MSNP serves as the country's guidance document to implement the prioritized and costed nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive actions to reduce malnutrition.

Measurement of impact

Through this case study, MQSUN+ assessed the activities that enabled progress towards the TAN impact of improved coverage of multisectoral nutrition programs or scaling up nutrition efforts in the country. This was done by evaluating whether the assumptions were met and whether the TA followed the MQSUN+ theory of change (TOC) pathway to enhance the quality, scale, and effectiveness of nutrition-related programs and policies (a TAN outcome), to achieve that impact. **Table 1** highlights this assessment by each key output of the Tajikistan TA.

^a This timeline is relative to the development of this retrospective case study in March 2018.

Table 1. Assumption assessment and signs of impact.

Assumption assessment and trajectory of change	
Multi-stakeholder mapping and engagement	<p>Assuming that engaged stakeholders can take ownership of common nutrition goals, the MQSUN+ team facilitated dialogues and workshops for multisectoral engagement around policy and strategy, within and between different sectors, so that the CRF would include the necessary sectoral inputs and targets.</p> <p>Roadblock I: Difficulty in obtaining invitation letters to meet with the relevant ministries.</p> <p>Outcome: A SUN "Secretariat" was established to facilitate the multi-stakeholder platform and the formation of working groups in several ministries, for the MQSUN+ team / SMS to support in further developing the CRF and a costed MSNP.</p> <p>Roadblock II: Limited nutrition awareness and capacity among the stakeholders.</p> <p>Outcome: MQSUN+ planned the facilitation of workshops to increase government decision-maker and stakeholder participation and awareness and highlight the value of a multisectoral approach.</p>
CRF development	<p>The CRF aims to obtain multisectoral commitments and set agreed actions to meet common nutrition goals. MQSUN+ led its drafting and outlined the evidence-based strategies to reduce stunting and micronutrient deficiencies and ensure childhood overweight does not increase.</p> <p>Roadblock I: After the CRF was completed and agreed upon by key stakeholders, the SUN Focal Point noted that the current CRF format was not conducive to government submission and approval.</p> <p>Outcome: The CRF was translated into an agreed format for the government's review to enable its fit into the broader government agenda and priorities. Phase II support is helping finalize this effort.</p> <p>Roadblock II: MQSUN+'s understanding was that the CRF would be officially endorsed, but the team learned, during Phase II TA, that the government will only endorse the costed MSNP.</p> <p>Outcome: Given that CRF endorsement at this stage was not feasible, the focus of the Phase II TA was to ensure the CRF is signed off by the SUN Technical Focal Point. This will enable the TA team and the country to adopt the CRF as the foundation for a complete, costed MSNP.</p>
Costing readiness assessment	<p>To achieve a complete costed plan, a key assumption is that sufficient data and detail are available to facilitate accurate costing. This includes specific, clear interventions with annual frequencies to achieve the targets, and unit prices per person reached or per outcome. To prepare for costing, MQSUN+ determined a need to verify this assumption—that sufficient detail exists for costing by assessing the readiness to cost priority nutrition interventions.</p> <p>Roadblocks: Through the costing readiness assessment, it was found that the relevant sectors did not provide baseline and annual targets for most interventions.</p> <p>Outcome: MQSUN+ submitted recommendations for defining clear actions / interventions. Those recommendations guided the development of the MSNP to ensure each sector has defined clear and specific actions/interventions which contribute to the targets outlined in the CRF. The next step will be to define 2025 and annual targets to be monitored along the way.</p>

Abbreviations: CRF, common results framework; MQSUN+, Maximising the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Plus; MSNP, multisectoral nutrition plan; SUN, Scaling Up Nutrition; SMS, SUN Movement Secretariat; TA, technical assistance.

Next steps

Roadblocks identified throughout the Phase I support have been actively identified and integrated into the Phase II TA. MQSUN+ will continue to assess progress along the impact trajectory for improved coverage of multisectoral nutrition programs and scaling up nutrition efforts in Tajikistan.

Acknowledgments

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