

An analysis of the Technical Assistance provided by TAN partners to SUN Countries

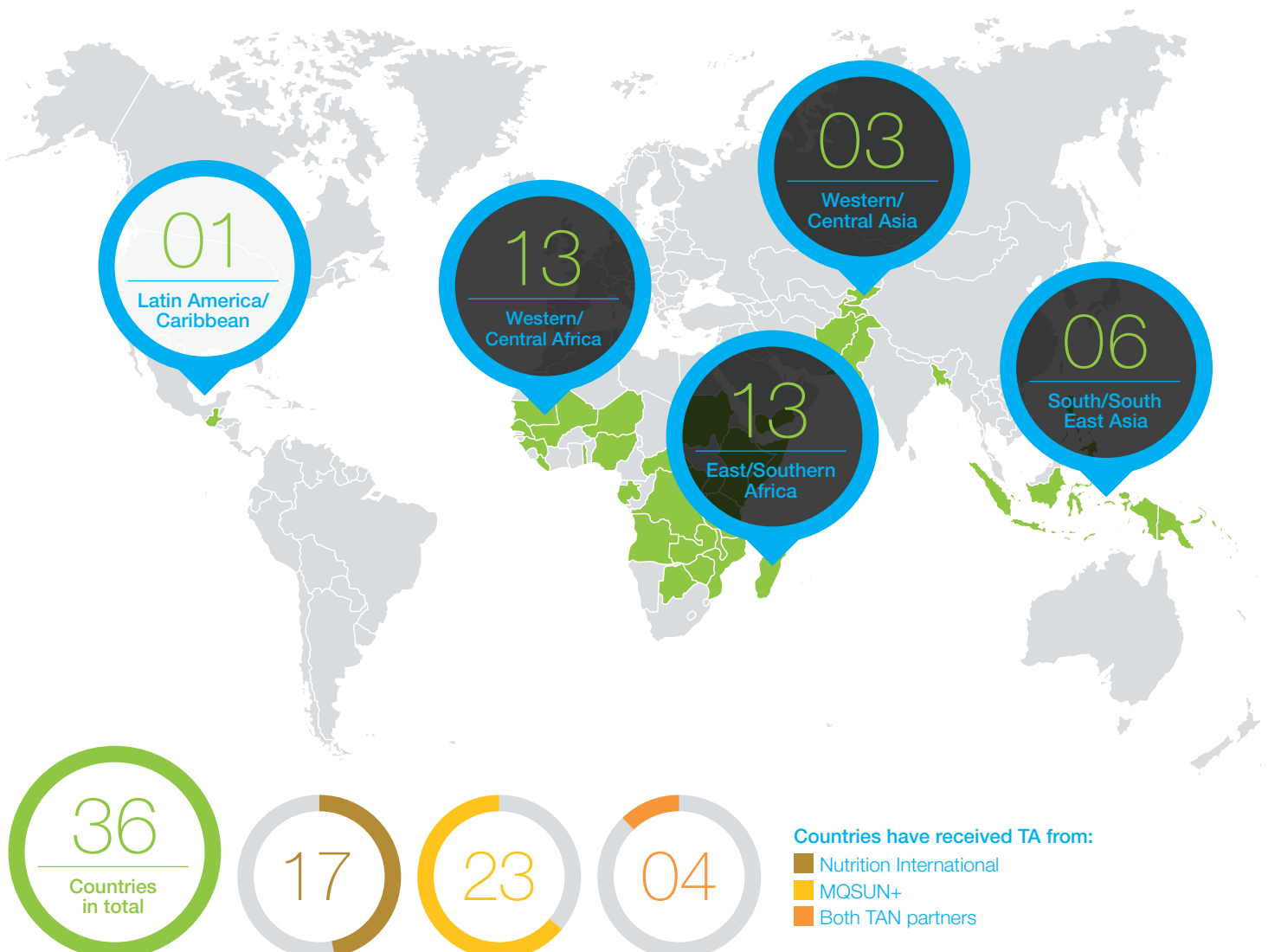
Introduction

This brief is part of a series of three briefs which aim to document technical assistance (TA) within the TAN programme, particularly exploring best practices and lessons learned from TA provision. The first brief considered TA ways of working within the TAN project and a third brief explores the value of TA provision within countries. This, the second brief, aims to explore the landscape of TA provision by the TAN partners, unpacking common TA themes and reflections on trends within TA provision during the four years of the TAN programme.

The TAN Programme

The Technical Assistance for Nutrition (TAN) programme, funded with UK aid from the UK government, is a mechanism to provide technical assistance (TA) to Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) country governments and build capacities towards advancing their multisectoral nutrition agendas, in line with the SUN Movement principles and roadmap. TAN also strives to generate, learn from, adapt and disseminate knowledge of what works within and across countries in the SUN Movement. TAN partners are the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS), Maximising the Quality of Scaling up Nutrition Plus (MQSUN+), Nutrition International, and the Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN). MQSUN+ and Nutrition International provide TA to SUN countries, while ENN provides knowledge management (KM) support to SUN countries, the TAN programme and SMS more broadly.

Countries that have been supported with TA





Reflections from the TAN partners

Patterns of TA requests

There continues to be high demand for TA from SUN countries. Countries that have been provided with TA vary in their experience of multi-sector nutrition programming, SUN structures and in-country capacity and thus, there is an expansive mix of TA requests and provision, each adapted to the country's needs and aims. Countries generally go through a process to scale up nutrition activities, from assessing the country context, supporting the development of national nutrition plans, assisting with governance structures, costing and financial tracking support and resource mobilisation, to monitoring and evaluation and in many countries, at least some level of TA is required throughout this progression. At times, TAN partners have responded to requests for ad hoc support to countries on specific themes, such as costing or budget analysis but more often, particularly in recent years, a more holistic, comprehensive package of support across these broad themes and processes has been provided.



© WFP Will Baxter 2018

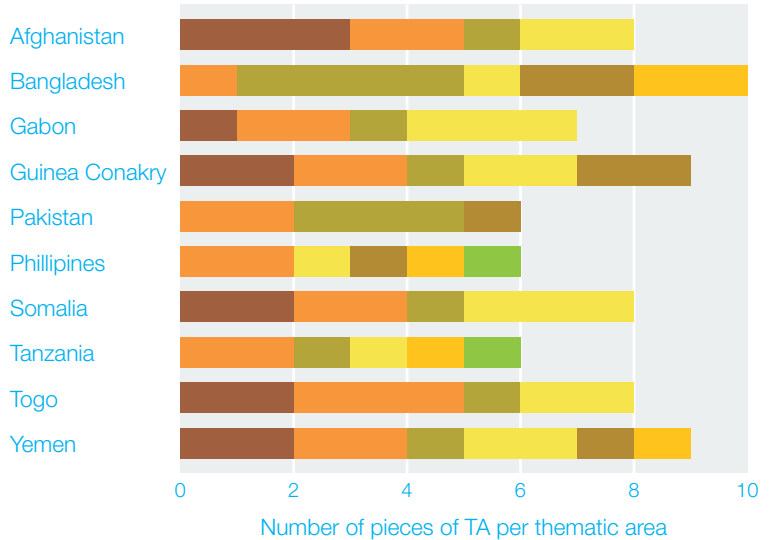
More recently, given the growing number of countries with established costed multi-sectoral plans, TA partners are seeing an emerging pattern of increased requests for TA focused at the sub-national level, particularly around implementation and resource mobilization; helping to implement the previously developed nutrition plans and mobilization and ensuring alignment around these plans. However, there has, and will continue to be, countries who need TA on the overarching multisectoral planning processes and such TA support continue.

Thematic areas and sub-themes

TA was commonly provided under several thematic areas including **assessing the country context** (which included sub-themes of policy framework analysis, situational analysis, stakeholder mapping and reviews of policies and strategies), **national multisectoral nutrition plans** (sub-themes included developing common results frameworks, revising nutrition plans, developing nutrition plans and operationalising plans), **governance** (which included the sub-themes of support to national governments, country nutrition governance bodies, SUN networks, subnational governance structures), **nutrition financing**

Countries that received the greatest number and variety of TA projects

10 countries have received numerous pieces of TA, covering a broad array of sub-themes.



- Assessing the Country Context
- National Multisectoral Nutrition Plan
- Governance
- Nutrition Financing
- Mobilising Support for Nutrition
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
- Micronutrient



Reflections from the TAN partners

Areas of impact

TAN partners reflected on the areas of TA that have the potential to offer the greatest impact on progress towards scaling up nutrition interventions, noting the importance of developing comprehensive national nutrition plans involving multiple sectors and stakeholders with a focus on implementation. Critically important is an understanding of country context and strengthening processes to sufficiently reflect changing country contexts. In addition, TA must focus on institutional strengthening and supporting governments in resource mobilization and monitoring towards impact. Crucially, TA must ensure that context-specific needs are realistically prioritized and that country capacity is built during the TA process so that all relevant stakeholders are engaged to develop a well informed and country-owned process of TA provision.

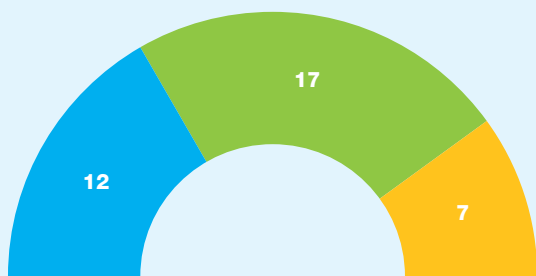
(sub-themes included costing nutrition plans, financial tracking support, conducting budget analysis), **mobilising support for nutrition** (which included the sub-themes of communication and advocacy support, resource mobilisation), **monitoring, evaluation and learning** (which included support for M&E plans/ frameworks, M&E surveillance systems, M&E tools, data analysis and use, knowledge management and learning) as well as **micronutrient related TA** (This included TA for micronutrient plans and guidelines, fortification enabling environment analysis and operational arrangements).



© WFP Shehzad Noorani 2017

In what contexts of fragility has TA been provided?

- Low/medium fragility
- High fragility
- Very high fragility



Reflections from the TAN partners

TA delivery in fragile contexts

The majority of TA provided by TAN partners is in high and/or very high fragility contexts, possibly indicating an increased need for TA from these countries. Countries that are deemed highly fragile require innovative TA provision, often based on rapidly changing contexts. As such, there tends to be an even greater focus on risk assessment throughout the process. Another important consideration within highly fragile contexts is the importance of ensuring that both humanitarian and development actors are involved in the TA, integrating a humanitarian perspective into TA provision and ensuring a broad range of stakeholders are engaged in the processes. Often TA in such contexts has had to be done remotely which provides unique challenges and opportunities. In such instances, there is more of a focus on coaching country actors to take the necessary steps to achieve TA goals. Critically, in such circumstances, TAN partners have learnt that TA is not simply about developing a 'plan A' for achieving country aims but ensuring there are strong contingency plans that can be carried forward if 'plan A' is no longer feasible.

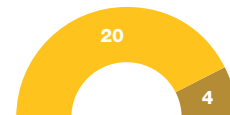
TA provided by overarching theme

Number of Countries

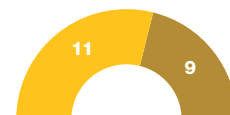
■ MQSUN+
■ Nutrition International



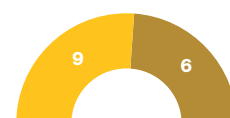
24 Nutrition Financing



20 Governance



16 National Multisectoral Nutrition Plans



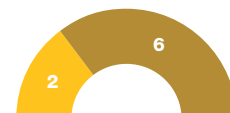
13 Assessing the Country Context



11 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning



08 Mobilising Support for Nutrition



02 Micronutrients



© WFP Gabriela Vivacqua 2019

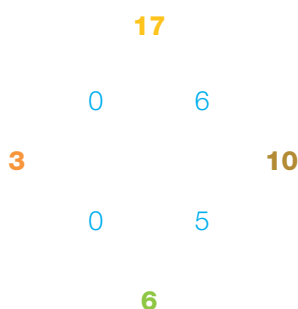


A breakdown of the most common TA provided to countries by sub-theme

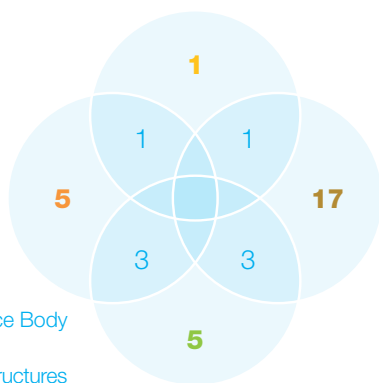
Nutrition financing, governance and national multisectoral nutrition plans were the most common themes of TA provided to countries. Under these 3 themes, the following sub-themes were requested from countries and provided by TAN partners. The graphs show how many countries received TA under each sub-theme.



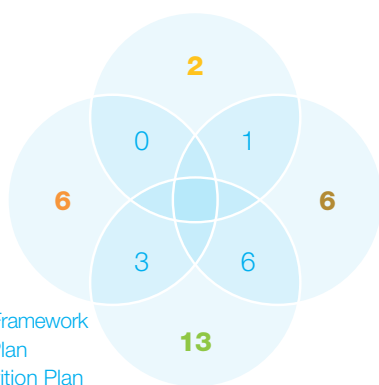
- Budget Analysis
- Costing
- Preparing for Costing
- Financial Tracking



- National Government
- Country Nutrition Governance Body
- SUN Networks
- Sub-National Governance Structures



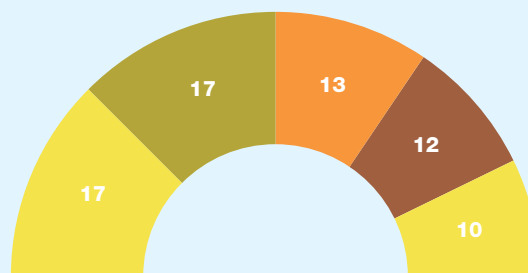
- Revise/Develop Policy
- Develop a Common Results Framework
- Develop National Nutrition Plan
- Operationalise National Nutrition Plan



The most common TA sub-themes provided to countries

When broken down by the common TA areas the top five sub-themes for each of the TAN partners included the following:*

- Budget Analysis
- Country Nutrition Governance Body
- Develop National Nutrition Plan
- Review of Nutrition Strategies and Laws
- Costing



*Note: some countries requested more than one form of this type of TA and hence figures do not add up to the total countries supported by TAN partners.

Reflections from the TAN partners

The expected evolution of TA

Much like the current shifts in TA provision, TAN partners expect that TA in the coming years will focus more on sub-national implementation, including working with sectors to integrate their plans with national nutrition policies and plans, supporting the establishment of sub-national coordination structures, including sub-national SUN networks, and facilitating institutional changes to be more adaptable to sub-national implementation. A critical component of this includes support for domestic resource mobilization, advocacy for increased resource allocation and capacity building. TAN partners also see an increasing need for legislation development to support operationalization and support for mid-term and end-line evaluations of national nutrition policies and plans.

Furthermore, TA will almost certainly evolve as the broader nutrition context evolves- including shifting due to the next SUN Movement Roadmap (SUN 3.0), the focus on universal health coverage, ensuring sustainable food systems and adapting to changing donor priorities. Renewed emphasis as countries move closer to the Sustainable Development Goal 2030 target will also likely affect TA provision. TA will, however, need to continue to be responsive to where different countries are in their own scale-up efforts and given this, some countries will still require TA support in earlier multisectoral planning processes.

