



Reviewing the Government of Kenya's National Nutrition Action Plan

TAN Technical Assistance Brief

- A dominant focus on ASAL areas was questioned and a possible level of duplication of nutrition activities in those regions was raised.
- Over-reliance on donor funding by the nutrition sector, especially for the implementation of programmes.

Next Steps

The Steering Committee is currently focussed on a new NNAP. It has already begun to engage stakeholders within thematic areas to build readiness and a thorough understanding of requirements for the next phase. Through this process the vital relationships built throughout the policy review process will endure.

Some key questions and issues that emerged from this TA which could be considered in the design of the next NNAP include:

- How to enable the “trickle-down” of national nutrition policies to the sub-national level so that they can influence and integrate into county level plans and budgets, and, how to measure uptake of national plans and guidance at the county level

- The need for a more detailed costing and analysis of resources channeled to the government for nutrition for operational and programmatic activities, and an assessment of the government’s ability to quantify partners’ budgets and contribution to the nutrition sector
- Addressing the uneven county capacity for coordination and delivery of nutrition actions, with a particular focus on the difference between counties with partner support versus those without
- The need for an audit of skillsets of those working in nutrition to ensure their capacity to work on nutrition in other sectors, and for nutrition staff to be able to work effectively in relevant (nutrition sensitive) areas.

KEY DOCUMENTS

Review Report on National Nutrition Action Plan NNAP 2012-2017 <https://bit.ly/2KqFOTK>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

About the Technical Assistance for Nutrition (TAN) Programme <https://bit.ly/2rHWqiN>
NI TAN Eligibility Criteria <https://bit.ly/2KZeegg>
Nutrition and Dietetics Unit (NDU): <http://clmsn.or>

This brief was researched by and created in collaboration with the TAN partner with responsibility for Knowledge Management - Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN). ENN’s Regional Knowledge Management Specialists in West and East Africa supported the capture of this learning and the ENN Global KM Coordinator worked closely with NI on the final drafts.

About Nutrition International

Founded in 1992, Nutrition International is a global organization dedicated to delivering proven nutrition interventions to those who need them most. Working in partnership with countries, donors and implementers, our experts conduct cutting-edge nutrition research, support critical policy formulation, and integrate nutrition into broader development programs. In more than 60 countries, primarily in Asia and Africa, Nutrition International nourishes people to nourish life. Find out more at www.NutritionIntl.org.

In 2017 Nutrition International’s Technical Assistance for Nutrition team (NI-TAN) undertook a review of Kenya’s National Nutrition Action Plan (NNAP) 2012-2017 with the intention to produce a report showcasing successes, challenges and lessons learned. The review was also meant to provide the foundation for the strategic direction, and design, of the next national nutrition plan, covering the period from 2018 to 2022.

This undertaking was initiated by Gladys Mugambi, the SUN Movement Focal Point and Head of the Nutrition and Dietetics Unit (NDU) within the Ministry of Health. The NDU is mandated to lead on nutrition in Kenya.

The goal of assessing impact every five years was a core objective of the NNAP, using Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and the Ministry of Health’s national online monitoring systems.

With the NNAP policy cycle ending, and a new planning cycle beginning in 2018, the review was seen as an opportunity take a close look at the progress in policy objectives, especially:

- the roles of stakeholders in coordinating and implementing nutrition activities
- if and how devolution had contributed to enhanced nutrition intervention outcomes

The launch of the Government of Kenya’s NNAP 2012-2017 coincided with the country’s induction into the SUN Movement in 2012. Representatives from 47 countries, the UN, the World Bank, donors and media representatives were present on the occasion.

Technical Assistance for Nutrition (TAN)

is a programme funded with UK aid from the UK government which seeks to improve the capacity of SUN countries to design, deliver, and track the progress of nutrition programs and to generate, learn from and adopt knowledge of what works.

Nutrition International is contributing to TAN by coordinating the provision of technical assistance to help national SUN focal points in select countries to overcome gaps in capacity for the design and delivery of multi-sectoral national nutrition plans, tapping into its global hub to source and deploy the expertise needed.



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The NNAP had 11 strategic objectives:

- SO1: To improve the nutritional status of women of reproductive age (15-49 years)
- SO2: To improve the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age
- SO3: To reduce the prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies in the population
- SO4: To prevent deterioration of nutritional status and save lives of vulnerable groups in emergencies
- SO5: To improve access to quality curative nutrition services
- SO6: To improve prevention, management and control of diet related NCDs
- SO7: To improve nutrition in schools, public and private institutions
- SO8: To improve nutrition knowledge attitudes and practices among the population
- SO9: To strengthen the nutrition surveillance, monitoring and evaluation systems
- SO10: To enhance evidence-based decision-making through research
- SO11: To Strengthen coordination and partnerships among the key nutrition actors and mobilize essential resources.

THE APPROACH TO PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Identifying Needs and Priorities

In August 2016 an inaugural meeting to commence the collaborative process of identifying and prioritising needs took place in Nairobi.

This early engagement of all stakeholders is a critical step in all technical assistance (TA) delivered through TAN.

The group of attendees constituted what SUN countries describe as the multi-stakeholder platform (MSP). In addition to the National Dietetics Unit (NDU) and its Director, the SUN Focal Point, the list of participants included different SUN networks active in Kenya, including: the SUN Business Network, the Civil Society Network (SUN CSA), the Academia Network, and the UN Network.

The gathering was used to build rapport, create understanding of priorities, and clarify which kind of TA could be supported under TAN.

Seven TA needs were assessed against NI-TAN's eligibility criteria. The findings were as follows:

- Timing: With the NNAP coming to an end, the development of a new plan was an obvious priority
- Strategic scope: The review findings were likely to influence other nutrition-related strategies thus advancing a longer-term SUN related agenda.
- Competing demands: TAN discussions were initiated during a season of a heightened humanitarian response leading to competing activities and stretched human resources within the nutrition sector. Since the NNAP review was a priority despite the on-going emergency, having extra dedicated resources to fill that sector gap was welcome.

Needs discussed that did not match TAN's criteria were shared with other TA providers in the country, and through the SUN Movement website, to provide a wider opportunity for response.

NI-TAN's support for the NNAP policy review was approved as the first TA to be delivered.

Recruiting Experts

NI-TAN lead the recruitment process for the consultants with input from partners at every stage. Building local capacity was a priority so Zipporah Bukania, a national consultant, and Rhodah Njuguna, an international consultant, were retained.

Technical Approach

The NI-TAN team drafted the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the policy review, soliciting input from the SUN Focal Point, and nutrition program officers from UNICEF and the NDU, cementing expectations for tasks, timelines, deliverables and outcomes.

The SUN Focal Point was influential in bringing on UNICEF as a TA partner. This allowed NI-TAN to leverage the relationship between the NDU and UNICEF to ensure that its efforts were well integrated into existing programs and initiatives. The SUN Focal Point was also instrumental in defining the skillset required from the consultant.

In the ToR, responsibilities were shared between the different partners. NI supported consultant costs and oversight, while UNICEF supported joint stakeholder workshops and other administrative aspects.

Ultimate sign-off authority was assigned to the SUN Focal Point.

The NI-TAN team also developed systems for quality assurance by defining desired deliverables and their quality standards. The key outputs were:

- A desk review report
- Inception report
- Design and development of interview tools
- Transcribed interview scripts
- A final report

These were delivered over an 8-month period.

A Steering Committee (SC) was established to support the delivery of the TA by providing advice on both policy and program reviews. SC members met weekly with partners: NI-TAN, SUN FP and UNICEF. The Committee selected the counties that were included in the review, and facilitated the sub-national discussions, the movements of the consultants, as well as ensuring the involvement of key stakeholders at every level.

The SC raised the critical need to increase the number of counties considered in the review to ensure a balanced representative of Kenya's geographic zones. As a result, the list of counties was expanded from 4 (Kakamega, Turkana, Marsabit and Nairobi) to 8 (Nyandarua, Kwale, Wajir and Isiolo). This decision lengthened the project timeline by 6 weeks. Both the global and regional NI-TAN teams were accommodating to the new requirements.

The draft final report was shared at a three-day stakeholders' workshop in November 2017. After incorporating the feedback from that meeting, the final document was completed and submitted to the Steering Committee, NI-TAN, and the SUN Focal Point in January 2018.

The report was also submitted to the Nutrition Interagency Coordinating Committee, an important forum for the nutrition sector in Kenya.

Findings and Achievements

The review concluded that the NNAP had achieved many of its programmatic objectives. Significant reductions in wasting and stunting occurred in the country during the period of implementation. The work of the NDU played a catalytic role.

The following key milestones were also achieved:

- Development of the Kenya Food and Nutrition Security Implementation Framework signed by the 47 governors and Permanent Secretaries from key implementing Ministries
- Mandatory food fortification standards
- Breastmilk Substitute (BMS) Act
- The Workplace Support Act
- New salt iodization standards
- School Nutrition and Meals Strategy
- NSNP (National Safety Net Programme)

Lessons Learned

Through delivery of this TA, some key lessons were learned which may inform future TA to Kenya, or the development of future national policies:

- Data: Some indicators in the NNAP were unclear in terms of what was to be measured, how improvement or performance would be monitored, and whether the selected methods of measurement were indicating nutrition impact or programmatic activities. The measurement of some programme indicators could only be provided through narrative descriptions.
- Measurement challenges relating to the baseline data: The timeline for some baseline indicators were outside the timelines of the NNAP (e.g. NNAP timelines were for the 2012 – 2017 period but baseline indicators ranged from 1999 to 2015). For example, baseline data for overweight, obesity and underweight in women of reproductive age were derived from the 2008 KDHS, and the impact for these indicators, in KDHS 2013/2014. The baseline for iron folic supplementation was from a 1999 survey, while progress was derived from 2011 survey. This made comparison for the varied programme objectives challenging.
- Multi-sector engagement: Other sectors were mentioned in the NNAP, but the engagement strategy was not well-defined. Expanding and defining the role for other sectors in contributing to nutrition outcomes is a key priority for Kenya in the next strategic phase of work on the new NNAP.