

Information Systems for Nutrition in SUN Countries

National information systems for nutrition are essential for assessing the current status and **measuring changes** in nutritional status of populations, **tracking progress** of actions taken to improve nutrition, and **prioritizing efforts** toward improving nutrition. An accurate assessment of the nutrition situation allows governments and their development partners to make evidence-based decisions with regards to nutrition policy and program development. Reliable monitoring of progress, evaluation of outcomes and demonstration of results are core functions for countries participating in the SUN Movement.

OBJECTIVE OF THIS REPORT

The objective of this report is to describe the current status of information systems for nutrition in each of and across the 57 SUN countries, based on information that is publicly available.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE REPORT

While governments take their own unique approach to establishing information systems for nutrition that reflect the context of the country, there are common elements and challenges. This report presents a list of key characteristics of a functional and effective national nutrition information system, with indicators grouped into three essential components. For each component, we present both the status of that indicator for the country and the number of SUN countries for which that is true. We have also provided additional notes regarding the value of each indicator.

FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS



GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The first component summarizes the extent to which government policies and systems demonstrate a commitment to tracking nutrition information.

POLICY AND PLANNING DOCUMENTS

A Common Results Framework that includes a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is useful for clearly articulating the specific nutrition data to be gathered from multiple sources in order to inform multi-sectoral responses.

A budget analysis to review allocations for nutrition in the national budget helps identify gaps and support resource mobilization.

Documents	All SUN Countries
Common Results Framework	42
Monitoring & Evaluation Framework	22
Budget Exercise Completed	43

TRACKING GLOBAL TARGETS

SUN countries are aiming to meet by 2025 the World Health Assembly (WHA) **global targets for improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition**. Inclusion of these goals in national policies and strategies is essential for establishing robust information systems to measure progress toward the agreed targets.

Countries are also encouraged to track progress in the prevention and control of major non-communicable diseases (NCD) using these nutrition-specific NCD targets.

WHA Global Nutrition Targets 2025	All SUN Countries
Stunting in children <5 years	27
Anemia in women of reproductive age	25
Birth weight in newborns	19
Overweight in children <5 years	13
Exclusive breastfeeding in children <6 months	28
Acute malnutrition in children <5 years	21
Global Non-Communicable Disease Targets 2025	
Overweight/Obesity in adults	13
Diabetes in adults	2
Salt/sodium intake	2

INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND COORDINATION

The designation of a ministry or department to coordinate nutrition information from various sources enhances government ownership, use and accountability.

A central repository for nutrition data and reports facilitates sharing information across sectors and programs. When the repository is publicly accessible (e.g. available online), there is greater transparency and equity of access to information for all stakeholders. This enhances advocacy efforts and facilitates evidence based policy and program.

A review of stakeholders involved in nutrition actions across the country helps ensure better coordination, reduce pressure on the system and have greater impact.

Data Coordination	All SUN Countries
Government coordinating body	24
Central repository for data	21
Data is publicly accessible	16
Stakeholder Mapping Completed	36

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT DATA

The second group of indicators looks at the **availability of nationally-representative survey data** which are often the main sources of information on nutrition specific indicators (e.g. anthropometric measures, infant and young child feeding practices, micronutrient supplementation coverage and distribution of deficiencies), as well as nutrition sensitive indicators (water and sanitation practices, quality and access to antenatal care, household food security).

NATIONAL HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEYS

DHS, MICS and national SMART surveys are important sources of data for assessing national progress, especially when conducted every 3-5 years.

National-level micronutrient surveys provide information on levels of vitamin and mineral deficiencies in pregnant women, women of reproductive age, children under five years of age and other nutritionally vulnerable groups.

National Surveys	All SUN Countries
Demographic & Health Survey, DHS ¹	48
Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, MICS ¹	29
Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions, SMART Survey ¹	16
Micronutrient or Fortification Survey ²	26

¹ Conducted within the last 5 years; ² Conducted within the last 10 years

NATIONAL FOOD SURVEYS

Other surveys, such as food consumption, food security or vulnerability mapping provide important information on national food-related issues.

Surveys ¹	All SUN Countries
Household Consumption and Expenditure Surveys	53
Food Security or Vulnerability Assessment Mapping	44

¹ Conducted within the last 5 years

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING DATA

The third component looks at the availability of **administrative information on the coverage of services and programmes in various sectors**. This information is useful to identify appropriate responses and track performance on a regular basis.

NUTRITION-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS & PROGRAMMES

We assess whether coverage data is collected on a routine basis for essential maternal and child nutrition interventions that are delivered either through health facilities or other programmes.

Including key nutrition indicators in the Health Management Information System (HMIS) enables regular tracking of coverage and identifying potential bottlenecks to be addressed in order to improve performance. Monthly reports on health and nutrition services delivered also provide valuable information to support accountability and advocacy efforts.

Routine monitoring of nutrition programme implementation provides timely data on successes and challenges, including whether interventions are reaching the target group in an equitable manner.

Health facility-based nutrition services	All SUN Countries
Micronutrient supplementation during pregnancy ¹	18
Breastfeeding promotion, facility-based ²	34
Infant & Young Child Feeding counselling, facility-based ²	28
Management of acute malnutrition in children <5 years ²	33
Nutrition programmes	
Vitamin A supplementation for children 6-59 months ³	48
Community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) ⁴	28
Food supplementation during pregnancy ¹	9
Fortification of staple foods ¹	16
Universal Salt Iodization ²	31

Sources: ¹ Country documents; ² UNICEFNutriDash 2015 or country documents; ³ UNICEF Vitamin A Programme Database; ⁴ Coverage Monitoring Network

SECTORAL PLATFORMS RELEVANT TO NUTRITION

Information systems in other key sectors for nutrition are a valuable source of data for context-specific analyses. Management information systems are available in key sectors most notably in health (HMIS), agriculture (AMIS), and education (EMIS). Examples of nutrition relevant indicators include population access to drinking water supply and sanitation, school attendance among girls, etc.

When nutrition-specific interventions are implemented through these sectoral delivery channels, their information systems can track relevant program and outcome indicators. Examples include tracking coverage for iron supplements and deworming delivered through schools, or tracking the delivery of fortified foods to pregnant women through safety net programmes.

Sectors	All SUN Countries
Health, HMIS	57
Agriculture and Food System, including Early Warning System & Food Markets Monitoring	49
Education	55
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, WASH	47*
Social Protection including Safety Net Programmes	31*
Early Childhood Development	24*

Sources: Country documents; * Information not accessed for all countries

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