

Review of SUN Country National Nutrition Plans

Based on the SUN Checklist on the criteria and characteristics of ‘good’ national nutrition plans

As of 2020, 61 countries and four Indian states have joined the global movement for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN). SUN countries have made major strides in bringing together stakeholders from multiple sectors to align national efforts to end malnutrition. One of the goals of the SUN Movement's Strategy and Roadmap for 2016-2020 is having all member countries endorse nutrition plans at the highest level of government (SUN Movement, 2016b). As of 2019, 36 SUN countries had a [common results framework](#) in place with national nutrition plans (NNP) to guide the implementation and achievement of the agreed goals and objectives (SUN, 2019). As the SUN Movement's current strategy period draws to a close, it is important to take stock of how countries are translating their nutrition agendas into planning documents and to assess the relative key strengths and gaps across plans to inform cross-country learning and future guidance.

In support of this, in collaboration with the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS), the Maximising the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Plus (MQSUN+) project conducted a systematic review of a sample of SUN NNPs based on the [Checklist on the criteria and characteristics of ‘good’ national nutrition plans](#). The review sought to identify common strengths, areas for further development and actionable recommendations for each country to inform next steps or improve future planning. This technical brief provides a high-level summary of the review. Individual country briefs were also developed for each country.

Defining characteristics of ‘good’ national nutrition plans

In 2016, the United Nations Network for SUN and the SMS, together with a group of experts, developed and launched a [Checklist on the criteria and characteristics of ‘good’ national nutrition plans](#), hereafter NNP Checklist (SUN, 2016a). The NNP Checklist is intended to guide the development of new multisectoral nutrition plans and also to assist in the review of existing plans and other nutrition-related sectoral planning documents. It is organised into five areas, with each area further subdivided into two to six criteria and each criteria listing several discrete aspects of a comprehensive NNP ([Figure 1](#)).

The NNP Checklist was developed to be aspirational in nature. Not all aspects of the Checklist may be feasible or necessary for all countries to utilise, but it provides a helpful framework to support multisectoral planning and to assess progress and gaps across SUN country plans.

For the purpose of the MQSUN+ review, only the main country plan document was included; reviews of related documents—such as food security and nutrition policies, separate NNP costing documents, annual operational plans, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks

and advocacy strategies—were not within the scope of this review. Because the NNP Checklist criteria were originally intended to apply to the full range of documents associated with an NNP, for the purposes of this evaluation MQSUN+ defined “basic characteristics”—a subset of the NNP Checklist tool questions—that all plans, regardless of country context, should include in the main planning document. The results for these basic characteristics, organised by NNP Checklist Area, are summarised in the figures in this report and paired with other general observations on the plans. An additional subset of characteristics was defined for this review to assess plans through a gender lens ([see MQSUN+ brief](#)), the results of which are also included.

Figure 1. Areas and corresponding criteria of the NNP Checklist.

<p>AREA 1: Situational analysis & policy / programming review</p>	<p>AREA 2: Stakeholder engagement & political commitment</p>	
<p>Criterion 1: The NNP provides a situation analysis of the nutrition context at national and subnational levels (including political, social, cultural, gender-based, epidemiological, legal, governance and institutional issues).</p> <p>Criterion 2: The NNP sets out goals and objectives, which are associated with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) nutrition impact targets and results for target populations that are consistent with human rights standards and international recommendations and contribute to improving equity in achieving nutrition impacts.</p> <p>Criterion 3: The NNP provides clear links to other nutrition-relevant sectoral strategies, plans and financing arrangements.</p> <p>Criterion 4: The NNP describes the planned priority actions aimed at achieving nutrition impacts for all forms of malnutrition and are feasible, sustainable, locally appropriate, based on evidence and good practice, and are in line with human rights priorities.</p> <p>Criterion 5: The NNP includes an analysis of risks and proposed mitigation strategies including measures to address emergency needs.</p> <p>Criterion 6: The NNP describes governance, accountability, management and coordination mechanisms.</p>	<p>Criterion 7: The NNP describes the multisector and multi-stakeholder involvement in the development of the final document.</p> <p>Criterion 8: The NNP has clear indications on the high-level political commitment to the endorsement and the implementation of the plan.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Costs & budgetary framework</p>	<p>AREA 4: Implementation & management arrangements</p>	<p>AREA 5: Monitoring, evaluation, operational research & review</p>
<p>Criterion 9: The NNP sets out a financial framework that includes a comprehensive budget/costing of planned actions for national and sub-national levels and demonstrates efficiency and effectiveness of the included programmes and interventions.</p> <p>Criterion 10: The NNP includes a financing analysis. If the plan is not fully financed, it highlights agreed priority options for the achievement of the set nutrition impact targets and associated results.</p> <p>Criterion 11: The NNP describes the mechanisms to allow the tracking of budget and expenditure data for nutrition across sectors and partners for decision-making, oversight and analysis on nutrition finances.</p> <p>Criterion 12: The NNP describes how funds and resources will be deployed to sectoral budget holders, partners and to the subnational level.</p>	<p>Criterion 13: The NNP describes the operational framework, which includes the implementation arrangements, with detailed roles and responsibilities of the government and partners.</p> <p>Criterion 14: The NNP describes the individual, organisational and institutional capacities (both functional and technical) required to implement planned actions and spells out how capacities will be strengthened.</p>	<p>Criterion 15: The NNP includes an M&E framework that is sound, draws from sectors’ M&E systems and includes core indicators; sources of information; methods and responsibilities for ethical data collection, management, analysis, quality assurance, learning and communication.</p> <p>Criterion 16: The NNP describes the mechanism for joint periodic performance reviews on nutrition to present programmatic and financial progress and for discussion on the findings for decision-making and actions.</p> <p>Criterion 17: The NNP sets out the processes and institutional arrangements for operational research (OR) and for the rigorous documentation and dissemination of good practices and lessons learned (including both successes and failures).</p>

Note: This figure presents a summary of the SUN [Checklist on the criteria and characteristics for ‘good’ national nutrition plans](#). For further detail on the individual characteristics defined for each Criterion, refer to the full Checklist. Abbreviations: M&E, monitoring and evaluation; NNP, national nutrition plan.

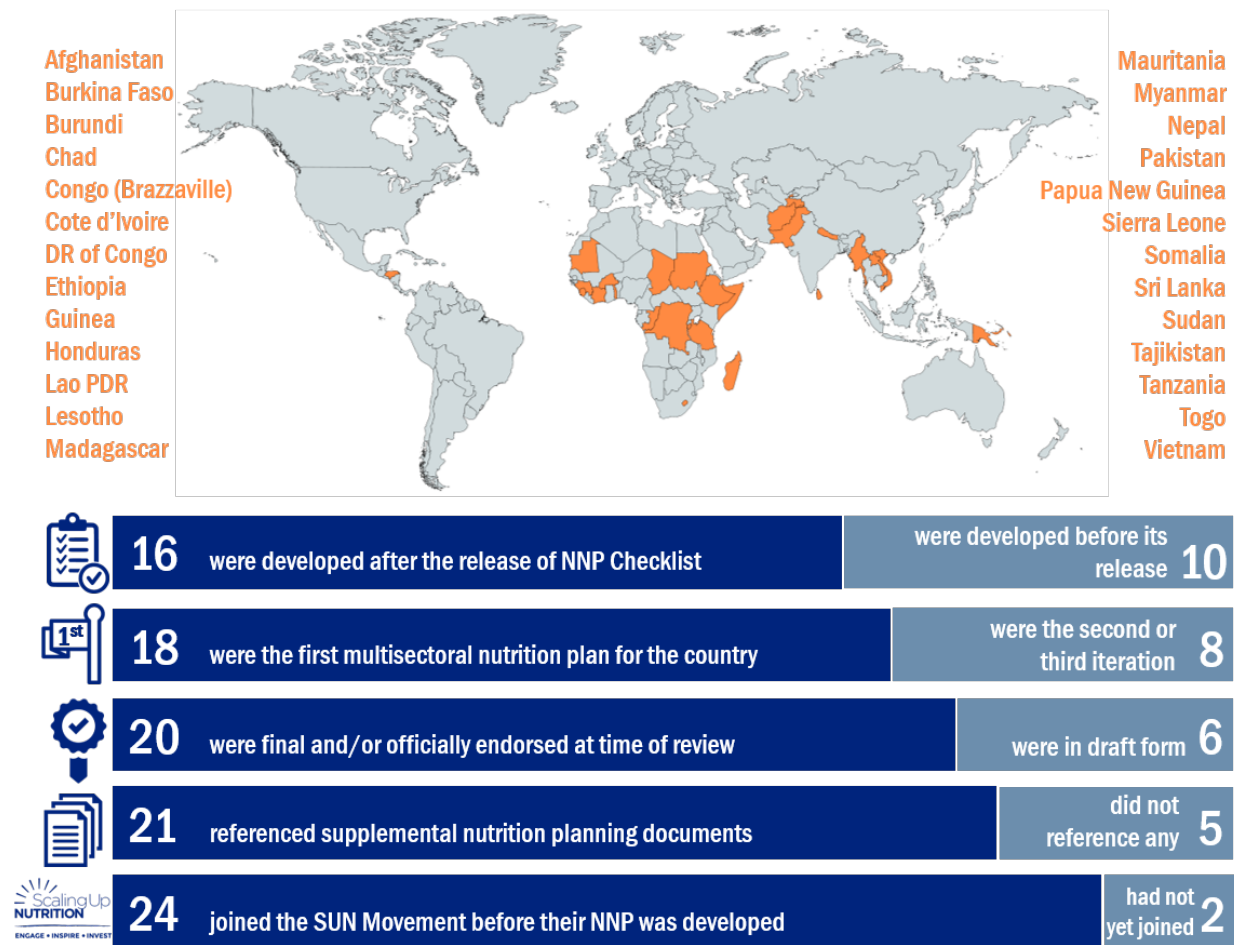
Overview of reviewed national nutrition plans

Whilst this review cannot assess translation of the plans into implementation or the eventual outcomes and impact, previous literature has suggested an association between the existence of NNPs—and other evidence of institutional commitment to nutrition—and nutrition outcomes (Sunguya et al. 2014; Fracassi, Siekmans, and Baker 2020). This analysis further explores the enabling characteristics of NNPs by providing a snapshot of whether a sampling of NNPs belonging to SUN Movement member countries adhered to basic measures of quality—as defined for the purpose of this review using the NNP Checklist as a general framework.

A total of 26 NNPs were included in the systematic review (Figure 2) and reviewed based on the individual characteristics defined in each area of the NNP Checklist (see Box 1 for methodology).

Figure 2. Breakdown of SUN country national nutrition plans included in the review.

26 national nutrition plans reviewed



Abbreviations: DR, Democratic Republic [of the Congo]; NNP, national nutrition plan; SUN, Scaling Up Nutrition Movement.

Box 1. Review Methodology

The eligibility criteria for included plans were SUN country NNPs that were developed beginning in 2016 (2014 if the plan was still active) and had been shared with SMS prior to May 2020. SMS provided the 26 plans to be included as part of this review exercise.

For each plan, two individuals reviewed the main NNP document (often referred to as a national nutrition strategy or action plan) using a survey tool based closely on the NNP Checklist and framed in checklist or multiple-choice format to allow reviewers to assess each characteristic independently. Several questions were also included to [facilitate a gender lens in the review process](#). Answers were reconciled between the two reviewers and a data analyst calculated the percentage of plans fulfilling each Checklist aspect.

Limitations: This review only included the analysis of the main NNP document, and thus the findings of certain NNP Checklist criteria should not be understood as a final judgment of country nutrition plans. Beyond the desk review of the main NNP documents, the only information collected, where possible, was the existence of supplementary planning documents. Some NNP Checklist aspects, therefore, could have been fulfilled in the actual planning process but were simply not described in the plan. Similarly, specific country contexts (beyond that described in the plan itself) were not considered in plan assessments. Due to the large number of characteristics in the NNP Checklist and countries assessed as well as the varying structure/terminology in each country plan, the quality control of data analysis primarily focused on reconciling discrepancies amongst reviewers and the basic characteristics of the plans, rather than verifying all answers.

Overall, the vast majority of the reviewed NNPs included core elements indicated in the NNP Checklist that are important to facilitate effective planning and implementation, such as:

- An assessment of the nutritional status of children under five and determinants of malnutrition.
- A commitment to global recommendations related to reducing malnutrition.
- Actions consistent with global evidence and responding to identified issues/gaps.
- Multisectoral governance arrangements to facilitate coordination of planned actions.
- Technical or governance capacity-building needs and/or actions to support effective implementation of the plan.

Other basic characteristics, such as referencing high-level endorsement of the plan, describing concrete advocacy actions to build support for the plan and describing how progress would be measured were slightly less common but were still included by a majority of the plans reviewed.

Our analysis of basic NNP characteristics also highlights a number of areas that could be further strengthened across countries to support effective operationalisation and implementation. For example:

- **Assessing risks to plan implementation and defining corresponding mitigation strategies.** Just over a third of the reviewed plans purposively identified or addressed potential risks to the plan implementation or included emergency planning and monitoring measures. This is important to further review and strengthen across countries, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and on top of existing and recurrent risks.
- **Advocacy and communication planning to promote implementation, engage stakeholders and mobilise resources.** Whilst the majority of plans did include at least some advocacy-related actions at the national and subnational level, this will be an important area for continued strengthening to sustain commitments to nutrition and plan implementation and mobilise resources where financial gaps are indicated.
- **Financial gap analysis and corresponding prioritisation planning based on the financial shortfall.** Few plans included an assessment of the financial gap. Whilst this may have been completed separately in some cases, such an assessment is critical to informing resource mobilisation

needs and efforts as well as to inform prioritisation of activities in the event of a funding shortfall.

- **Defining roles, responsibilities and accountability mechanisms.** Defining lead and supporting institutions responsible for each planned action and ensuring a mechanism is in place to facilitate coordination, mutual accountability and feedback loops are critical to effective implementation. These aspects, covered throughout the NNP Checklist, were varyingly addressed in about half of reviewed plans—indicating this as an area for potential further strengthening.
- **Considering gender and equity.** The majority of plans addressed the impact of gender on nutrition in their plans to at least some extent, but not in a comprehensive manner. Although these aspects were not included in the original NNP Checklist, the evaluation of these plans indicate that future nutrition planning could benefit from additional guidance on increasing gender sensitivity.

Although some aspects (such as the inclusion of risk mitigation plans and including a diverse cross-section of stakeholders in the plan development) appeared to improve for plans developed after the release of the NNP Checklist, other aspects were rarely fulfilled, regardless of when the plan was developed or even if the country had prior experiences with multisectoral nutrition planning. In particular, as noted, very few plans estimated the financial gap between the cost of the plan's actions and existing funding or a process for prioritising actions or populations in the event of a financial shortfall. Given the wide scope and ambition of multisectoral nutrition plans, the inclusion of these basic criteria is particularly important for their overall sustainability.

The following section presents summaries of the basic characteristics and other observations of the reviewed plans' performance within each NNP Checklist Area. [Annex 1](#) reports the results for all aspects (basic and other) included in the Checklist for further reference.

Key results by Checklist Area

NNP Checklist Area 1: Situation analysis and policy and programming review

Area 1 of the NNP Checklist assesses plans' description of the country's nutrition situation (Criteria 1-3), as well as the actions and the coordinating bodies proposed to address the country's key nutrition issues (Criteria 4-6). Overall, the vast majority of plans included most of the basic aspects in this Area ([Figure 3](#)). **All plans included a goal to reduce hunger and ensure nutrition for its population, all but one plan discussed the nutritional status, trends and determinants of malnutrition for children under five and 24 plans (over 90%) described existing nutrition-related efforts and areas for improvement.** Less consistent, however, was the inclusion of goals that contribute towards all six World Health Assembly (WHA) nutrition-related targets: slightly fewer than half of all plans fulfilled this aspect. Whilst all but two plans included a target for stunting, targets for reducing low birth weight and preventing increases in childhood overweight were less common (17 plans/65%, and 15 plans/58%, respectively). Given country commitments to report on WHA targets, these should be included in all plans.

In addition, almost all plans proposed actions that were in-line with global recommendations (in particular, the nutrition-specific interventions cited in the Lancet [Bhutta et al. 2013]) and included at least some actions that responded directly to the issues raised in the situational analysis and programming review.

Figure 3. Number of NNPs fulfilling basic characteristics of the NNP Checklist: Area 1.



Recognising that implementation of the plan requires the creation or strengthening of governing bodies, the majority of plans also described multisectoral governance bodies at the national level, and to a slightly lesser extent (and with less detail), at the subnational level. However, whilst not included as a basic characteristic, it is notable that just over half of the plans refer to existing national policies when discussing its governance, accountability, oversight, enforcement and/or

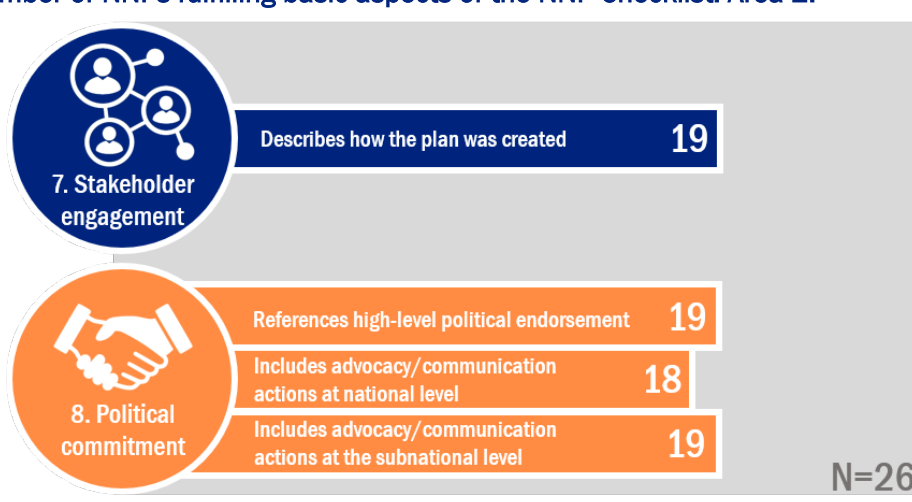
reporting mechanisms. Whilst the process and mechanisms for this will vary across countries, a lack of clear accountability mechanisms may inhibit implementation success and institutionalisation of nutrition as a priority.

Less common amongst plans was the presence of a mitigation plan to address risks to plan implementation: only nine plans (35%) included this aspect. Of these, an even smaller proportion indicated the lead and supporting bodies responsible for carrying out the mitigation measures. By comparison, measures to address nutritional emergencies were common amongst plans. However, most plans included either the development of emergency plans or early warning/food security monitoring systems, but not both actions (only 10 plans, or 38%, did so).

NNP Checklist Area 2: Stakeholder engagement and high-level political commitment

Area 2 of the NNP Checklist focuses on ensuring the engagement of all stakeholders during the development of the plan (Criterion 7) and sustaining political support for the plan during implementation (Criterion 8). Within this area, the majority of plans fulfilled the basic NNP Checklist aspects (Figure 4), although to a lesser extent than most of Area 1. Nineteen out of 26 plans (73%) included a description of multi-stakeholder and multisectoral input into the plan. However, it should be noted that all plans evaluated were multisectoral in nature, and thus likely did involve a wide range of stakeholders even if the plans did not necessarily state as such. In addition, of the 16 plans developed after the release of the NNP Checklist (2017 or later), all but two included this description within the plan—with nine also specifying that subnational stakeholders were involved in the plan development. This compares with only five out of the ten plans developed before the release of the NNP Checklist including this description—with none of those indicating subnational involvement.

Figure 4. Number of NNPs fulfilling basic aspects of the NNP Checklist: Area 2.



In terms of building political support, 19 plans (73%) were either already endorsed or noted that it would be endorsed and/or made official by a high-level authority or national legislative body. Similar proportions also proposed ways to increase awareness for the plan, advocate for increased funding and other advocacy measures to promote implementation at the national/central government level (18 plans, or 69%) and subnational level (19 plans, or 73%). Nine plans further demonstrated the importance of promoting the plan and its overarching goals by proposing or referencing a separate advocacy and communications strategy with additional detail.

NNP Checklist Area 3: Costs and budgetary framework

Plan documentation on the third area of the NNP Checklist, which concerns financial arrangements for implementing the NNP, was mixed (Figure 5). The most commonly fulfilled basic aspect of this area was referencing cost estimates, which 17 plans (65%) included in the main planning document, whilst an additional five plans proposed costing as a future activity or referenced that it was done elsewhere. However, of the 17 plans with documented cost estimates, only 13 plans included cost estimates for coordination bodies and activities—suggesting that some plans did not include the full scope of costs required for multisectoral implementation. Additionally, of the 17 plans that presented costing, only 10 (59%) included any details on the costing methodology, so assumptions made during the costing process for most plans were unclear.

Estimating the gap between the cost of the plan and available financial resources was also relatively rare (7 plans). In several of these cases, it was also unclear whether the estimated gaps accounted for external and private funding, as opposed to just government funding. In all instances where the gap was estimated, however, the funding gap was significant; this suggests that all plans will need to prioritise resource mobilisation efforts and determine a process to prioritise interventions, key populations and/or vulnerable groups. However, only six plans (23%) discussed any criteria to do so, and only four plans (15%) described a financial tracking method including sources and levels of funding, allocations and expenditures in order to assess and adjust resource use accordingly.

Figure 5. Number of NNPs fulfilling basic aspects of the NNP Checklist: Area 3.



NNP Checklist Area 4: Implementation and management arrangements

Area 4 of the NNP Checklist concerns the specific implementation details (Criterion 13) and the capacity-building needs of individuals and institutions (Criterion 14) required to carry out the plan (Figure 6). Because several plans opt to provide specifics on plan implementation in a separate operational framework document, the only Checklist aspect designated as *basic* for this Criterion was listing the lead and supporting organisation for each action, which half of all plans did. Additionally, nine plans (35%) described a clear timeline for development of specific guidelines and operational planning, which may assist in building momentum and moving plan implementation forward, even if a more detailed work plan is to eventually follow.

Almost all plans (23 plans, or 88%) capacity building needs or related actions, mostly in terms of developing specific skills amongst nutrition specialists, increasing the nutrition-sensitivity of workers outside of the health sector, and/or coordination capacity amongst the plan's governing bodies. These needs were usually described in a general sense and details, such as institutional training arrangements and sourcing of experts, were omitted from most plans. However, six plans noted that separate capacity assessments and/or capacity development plans would be developed.

Figure 6. Number of NNPs fulfilling basic aspects of the NNP Checklist: Area 4.



NNP Checklist Area 5: Monitoring, evaluation, operational research and review

The final area of the NNP Checklist, concerning M&E, includes a number of details that are typically found in a separate M&E framework document. However, the basic aspects described in Figure 7 should ideally also be referenced in the main planning document to establish a baseline understanding of how the plan should be evaluated. For the most part, the majority of plans fulfilled these aspects: 19 out of 26 plans (73%) included both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive indicators (beyond the nutrition impact targets described under Area 2); and 21 plans (81%) provided a description of how progress would be reviewed and discussed operational research of the actions described in the plan. Less common, however, were specifics on how the monitoring process would include feedback loops to make adjustments to implementation over time (14 plans, or 54%, mentioned this) and a coordinating mechanism to identify and prioritise operational research opportunities (specified in 9 plans, or 35%).

Figure 7. Number of NNPs fulfilling basic aspects of the NNP Checklist: Area 5.



Gender assessment

Although the NNP Checklist does not include criteria pertaining specifically to the gender dimensions of nutrition, one of SUN's overarching aims is to reduce nutritional inequities, particularly amongst women and girls. As part of this commitment, a set of gender-responsiveness aspects relevant to the NNP Checklist areas and criteria were developed through consultations with SMS, a gender expert, and relevant tools/literature. [Figure 8](#) summarises the results of these aspects.

The vast majority of plans (24 out of 26, or 92%) included at least one action to address the gender dimensions of nutrition, such as interventions to promote women's decision-making, generate income for economically vulnerable women or increase girls' schooling. However, the number and scope of actions varied widely across plans and whether these actions will be sufficient to address the numerous ways in which gender may affect nutrition was unclear for most plans. Fewer plans included sex-disaggregated data for key indicators (16 plans, or 62%) or discussed how gender norms and roles impacts nutrition in the country (17 plans, or 65%) in the situation analysis. Amongst plans that did, there was also a great deal of variation in the level of detail provided, and in cases where gender was discussed in detail, the proposed actions did not necessarily address all of the gender-related issues raised in the situation analysis. In addition, only 16 plans (62%) included gender equality as part of the guiding principles, overarching goals or strategic vision. Relatedly, only six plans (23%) explicitly described how gender considerations would be addressed/mainstreamed across plan activities. Some examples amongst the plans that did were to include a gender focal point in the plan's multisectoral coordination groups and to assign the ministry of women/gender to ensure the incorporation of gender issues across all nutrition-sensitive activities.

For gender aspects related to the latter parts of the NNP Checklist, only plans with a certain level of detail could be evaluated. For instance, since only nine plans provided a list of stakeholders that

were involved in the plan’s development, only those were evaluated on whether they included stakeholders with gender expertise. Amongst these plans, over half (5 plans, or 56%) listed a representative from a women’s/gender ministry, UN gender group or a civil society organisation specialising in gender. A similar proportion of plans with any indicators included gender equality indicators (14 out of 22 plans, or 64%), yet only five of the 20 plans (25%) that discussed data collection referenced the need for the M&E system to disaggregate data by sex. Lastly, only one plan with any reference to capacity building (out of 22 plans) discussed specific measures to address the unique needs of men and women in capacity-building efforts. Separate capacity development and M&E planning documents (not included in this review) might contain more of these details.

Figure 8. Number of NNPs demonstrating gender sensitivity across NNP Checklist areas.



Notes: ¹ Only nine plans described stakeholder engagement at all within the plan; ² Only 22 plans mentioned any capacity assessment or capacity-building actions within the plan; ³ Only 22 plans included any indicators within the plan; ⁴ Only 20 plans described data collection.

Conclusion

Overall, the majority of the reviewed NNPs fulfilled most of the basic characteristics—as defined by SMS and MQSUN+ to review the plans and following the framework of the NNP Checklist.

Importantly, all plans committed to the goal of reducing malnutrition through the cooperation and amplified efforts of multiple sectors; and with few exceptions, outlined the specific nutrition issues, proposed actions to address them and specified governance arrangements to oversee and provide strategic direction to the plan. Additionally, plans that were developed after the release of the NNP Checklist more frequently included certain Checklist aspects (such as inclusive stakeholder involvement in plan development and risk mitigation)—demonstrating potential uptake of the Checklist’s guidance on plan development.

The analysis of basic characteristics also indicates that of the five Checklist areas, plans tended to struggle the most with their financial framework (Area 3). Plans rarely estimated financial gaps between the cost of actions and existing financial resources, provided details on a finance-tracking mechanism or established criteria for prioritising actions in the event of a budgetary shortfall. This was true both of plans developed before and after the release of the Checklist and of the several plans in the second or third iteration of implementation. Coupled with the fact that several plans noted lack of funding as a primary constraint in past nutrition efforts, identifying ways to ensure the financial sustainability of plans and effective use of available funds should be a continued focus of research efforts and technical assistance for multisectoral nutrition programming. In countries where implementing a comprehensive financial tracking system is not feasible, at a minimum, countries should be aware of disparities in nutritional outcomes and which populations should be targeted. Based on the varying level of detail on disparities and vulnerable populations in the reviewed plans, some countries may be more primed to make these decisions than others.

Notably, although the majority of plans were endorsed by a high-level political body (or noted plans to do so), not all of them were. This was true even of some plans that were considered final and official documents. Although it is unclear whether explicit high-level endorsement is required in order for multiple ministries and/or local governments to move forward with implementation, at the very least it signals to all stakeholders—who may not be accustomed to collaborating in a multisectoral fashion—that they are expected to integrate the plan in their existing responsibilities.

Beyond the basic characteristics, the 26 plans evaluated varied widely in other areas of the NNP Checklist. **Annex 1**, which provides results for all aspects (basic and non-basic) referenced in the Checklist, demonstrates this dynamic. These results should be interpreted with the acknowledgement that only the main planning document was used to tabulate results, and in many cases, countries may opt to develop separate plans (such as capacity development and M&E frameworks) that include several of these aspects. Nevertheless, several main planning documents managed to include details—such as linkages with sectoral plans, measures to improve routine information systems and other actions to strengthen M&E capacity—and specific timelines and/or milestones. This indicates that, where possible and relevant to the planning context, countries can strive to include many of the NNP Checklist aspects beyond these basic characteristics in order to develop a common understanding of the plan amongst all involved stakeholders.

Because of the diversity across reviewed plans' strengths and areas for improvement, a brief for each country has been developed—which includes key recommendations for next steps or in the next iteration of the plan. SMS and SUN member countries should continue to assess what does and

does not work for individual countries in practice so that the lessons learned can further inform guidance to SUN countries and any useful revisions or supplements to the NNP Checklist. Following this review exercise, MQSUN+ updated the NNP Checklist to clarify and modify some characteristics based on the review experience and integrate the defined gender characteristics. This revised Checklist is under review by SMS and is expected to be released later this year as an update to the original Checklist.

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Annex 2. Results for all NNP Checklist aspects

Checklist aspect	% of plans	
Criterion 1: The national nutrition plan provides a situation analysis of the nutrition context at national and subnational levels (including political, social, cultural, gender-based, epidemiological, legal, governance, and institutional issues).		
(#1.1) Includes the following for under-5 children:	Trends	77%
	Nutritional status	100%
	Determinants of malnutrition	96%
(#1.1) The situation analysis includes nutrition status, trends, and/or determinants of malnutrition for the following population groups:	Adolescent	35%
	Women of reproductive age	88%
	Children 5-10 years	19%
(#1.1) Information in the situation analysis is disaggregated by the following:*	Sex	58%
	Region	77%
	Urban/Rural	65%
	Ethnicity	0%
	Socio-economic status	58%
	Disability	0%
(#1.1) The situation analysis discusses the risk factors (causes) of malnutrition.		96%
(#1.1) The situation analysis (or other parts of the plan) references the following country contexts:	Political	46%
	Socio-economic	88%
	Organisational (non-governmental, e.g. UN, civil society)	73%
(Gender) The situation analysis includes sex-disaggregated data for key nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive indicators.		62%
(Gender) The situation analysis includes discussion of the gender dimensions of nutrition beyond data disaggregation alone.		65%
(#1.2) The plan discusses the human rights of every individual having the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, medical care, necessary social services, and the right to security; and that motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.		35%
(#1.2) The situation analysis includes an equity analysis of groups whose human rights may be threatened (e.g. marginalized or vulnerable populations).		42%
Met all basic characteristics for Criterion 1		81%

*Bold: Basic requirement; Orange: Gender-sensitive aspect not originally part of the NNP Checklist; *Met basic requirement if data was disaggregated by sex or region.*

Checklist aspect		% of plans
Criterion 2: The national nutrition plan sets out goals and objectives, which are associated with SMART nutrition impact targets and results for target populations that are consistent with human rights standards and international recommendations and contribute to improving equity in achieving nutrition impacts.		
(#1.3) The document includes goals and objectives that are consistent with internationally agreed recommendations (i.e. the Sustainable Development Goals, the Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), the Zero Hunger Challenge, the Rome Declaration and the Framework for Action on Nutrition).		100%
(#1.4) Nutrition targets contribute towards the following World Health Assembly nutrition targets and diet-related non-communicable disease targets:	WHA 1: 40% reduction in stunting among children under 5	92%
	WHA 2: 50% reduction in anaemia in women of reproductive age	81%
	WHA 3: 30% reduction in low birth weight	65%
	WHA 4: No increase in childhood overweight	58%
	WHA 5: Increase rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50%	69%
	WHA 6: Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%	81%
	NCD 4: 30% reduction in mean population intake of salt/sodium.	4%
	NCD 6: 25% reduction in the prevalence of raised blood pressure or contain the prevalence of raised blood pressure	8%
	NCD 7: Halt the rise in diabetes and obesity.	46%
(#1.4) The document includes nutrition targets that are specific to the national context (e.g. reduction of child VAD, reduction of under-nutrition among PLWHA).		81%
(#1.5) The expected results included in this document fulfil the following SMART criteria:	Specific: are easy to understand the specific measure (e.g. not "reduction of malnutrition" or "improve coordination")	88%
	Measurable: can be quantified and state the quantities, or objectively assessed	85%
	Relevant: are relevant to nutrition	96%
	Time-bound: include figures and dates for baseline and endpoint	81%
(#1.5) The document includes targets for marginalized or vulnerable populations instead of only giving national averages, in line with the equity analysis.		35%
(Gender) The plan specifically mentions gender equality as part of the strategic vision, goals or principles.		62%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 2		42%
Criterion 3: The national nutrition plan provides clear links to other nutrition-relevant sectoral strategies, plans and financing arrangements.		
(#1.6) The document describes past and current nutrition responses for the following sectors:*	Agriculture	77%
	Education	65%
	Food Security/Livelihoods	58%
	Local Development	8%
	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	54%
	Health	92%
	Social protection	69%
	Gender/Women	19%
(#1.6) The document discusses priority gaps, lessons learned, and/or areas for improvement (e.g. nutrition governance, human resource development, other system weaknesses) for the sectors included in the plan, or system-wide issues.		96%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 3		88%

*Bold: Basic requirement; Orange: Gender-sensitive aspect not originally part of the NNP Checklist; *Fulfilled basic requirement if at least one sector beyond health and/or food security was discussed.*

Checklist aspect		% of plans
Criterion 4: The national nutrition plan describes the planned priority actions aimed at achieving nutrition impacts for all forms of malnutrition and are feasible, sustainable, locally appropriate, based on evidence and good practice, and are in line with human rights priorities.		
(#1.7) The plan contains actions that are:	In line with global evidence or are justified by field evidence	96%
	Selected in response to issues identified in the situation analysis	96%
	Relevant to the gaps described in the policy and programming review	88%
(Gender) The plan contains actions that incorporate gender dimensions of nutrition (e.g. actions that promote women's decision making, girls' education, male involvement).		92%
(Gender) The plan describes how gender considerations will be mainstreamed/integrated (e.g. promotion of equitable participation of men, women, boys and girls; addressing harmful gender norms and inequities) across plan activities.		19%
(#1.7) For each strategic area, the plan describes how the actions contribute towards the expected results and impact, OR actions are summarized in a theory of change.		88%
(#1.8) The plan identifies priority actions that address bottlenecks in the enabling environment that impact any of the following:*	Equity	85%
	Financial sustainability	73%
	Human resource management	62%
	Planning	100%
	Enforcement of regulations	81%
(#1.9) The document identifies innovative approaches to pilot/implement, that have evidence or justification that they may lead to positive nutrition outcomes.		46%
(#1.9) If innovative approaches are proposed, the plan indicates the theory of change pathway believed to impact it.		†
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 4		88%
Criterion 5: The national nutrition plan includes an analysis of risks and proposed mitigation strategies including measures to address emergency needs.		
(#1.10) The plan identifies the following risks that may negatively impact the implementation of the plan:§	Emergencies	31%
	Socio-economic risks	23%
	Programmatic risks	35%
	Political	31%
(#1.11) The document clearly describes mitigation approaches to address risks to implementation of the plan's actions.		35%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 5: mitigation of risks to implementation		35%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 5: addressing emergency needs‡		38%

*Bold: Basic requirement. Orange: Gender-sensitive aspect not originally part of the NNP Checklist. *Fulfilled basic requirement if actions addressed at least two kinds of bottlenecks. †See Criterion 4, #1.7 on whether actions contribute towards expected results and impact. §Fulfilled basic requirement if any risks were identified. ‡Met basic requirement if the plan included emergency planning and development of an early warning/food security monitoring system.*

Checklist aspect		% of plans
Criterion 6: The national nutrition plan describes governance, accountability, management and coordination mechanisms.		
(#1.12) The document clearly describes multisectoral and multi-stakeholder governance arrangements at:	National Level	92%
	Subnational Level	85%
(#1.13) The plan refers to existing national policies when discussing its governance, accountability, oversight, enforcement, and/or reporting mechanisms.		54%
(#1.14) The document outlines existing accountability mechanisms for rights-holders/their representatives, including:	Claim nutrition-related right	0%
	Report on violations of their rights	0%
	File complaints about cases where implementation is lacking	4%
(#1.15) The document describes the institutional framework that should be in place for identifying and managing Conflicts of Interest (CoI).		8%
(#1.15) The document links a CoI institutional framework with other oversight mechanisms.		0%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 6		81%
Criterion 7: The national nutrition plan describes the multisector and multi-stakeholder involvement in the development of the final document.		
The document includes any reference to how the plan was created.		73%
(#2.1) The document explains how stakeholders were involved in the validation of the situation analysis and the rest of the plan development process.		73%
(#2.1) The plan describes how government stakeholders provided input into plan development at:	National Level	58%
	Subnational Level	38%
(Gender) Stakeholders with gender expertise (e.g. ministry of women's affairs, women's rights CSOs, gender divisions of the UN) were included in plan development.		56%
(#2.2) The document provides clear references to existing codes of conduct and legal obligations that were used to prevent and manage Conflict of Interest during the development, endorsement and implementation of the plan		0%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 7		73%
Criterion 8: The national nutrition plan has clear indications on the high-level political commitment to the endorsement and the implementation of the plan.		
(#2.3) The plan references how formal high-level political endorsement (e.g. national assembly) has been achieved or will be pursued.		69%
(#2.3) The plan references how the endorsement of the plan by local authorities has been achieved or will be pursued.		*
(#2.4) The document includes a section on advocacy and communication that describes specific plans and activities to engage stakeholders (e.g. mobilisation of champions and parliamentarians) at:	National level	65%
	Subnational level	50%
(#2.4) The document includes a section on advocacy and communication that describes specific activities to promote implementation (e.g. rolled out to subnational level or how citizens will be engaged) at:	National level	62%
	Subnational level	69%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 8†		50%

Bold: Basic requirement. **Orange:** Gender-sensitive aspect not originally part of the NNP Checklist. *See Criterion 6, #1.12 on whether a subnational coordination mechanism was described; and Criterion 8, #2.4 on whether advocacy/communication to promote implementation at the subnational level was described. †Fulfilled basic characteristics if any advocacy/communication actions were specified at both national and subnational levels.

Checklist aspect		% of plans
Criterion 9: The national nutrition plan sets out a financial framework that includes a comprehensive budget/costing of planned actions for national and subnational levels and demonstrates efficiency and effectiveness of the included programmes and interventions.		
(#3.1) The document contains cost estimates of planned actions.		65%
(#3.1) The document includes a description of costing methodology, including assumptions.		38%
(#3.1) The cost estimates include:	Staff	12%
	Equipment	8%
	Supply/consumables	8%
	Training costs	12%
	Supervision costs	12%
	Maintenance/utilities costs	8%
(#3.1) The document describes how the costing methodology aligns with existing budget frameworks of the sectors concerned.		31%
(#3.2) The financial framework includes cost estimates for the following nutrition governance aspects:	Coordination mechanisms at national level	50%
	Coordination mechanisms at subnational level	50%
	Workforce capacity-building	50%
	Information systems to track implementation and expenditure	46%
(#3.3) The document includes a clear reference to cost-benefit analysis when justifying the plan's priorities.		*
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 9		50%
Criterion 10: The national nutrition plan includes a financing analysis. If the plan is not fully financed, it highlights agreed priority options for the achievement of the set nutrition impact targets and associated results.		
(#3.4) The financial framework includes an estimate of the financial gaps for the costed actions.		27%
(#3.4) The financial framework estimates baseline financing levels for the planned actions among the following sources:	Domestic (public)	27%
	Domestic (private)	4%
	External	15%
(#3.4) The financial framework includes current financial commitments for the time span of the plan for:	Domestic	27%
	External (including lending)	19%
	Considerations on uncertainties and risk	12%
(#3.5) In the event of funding uncertainty or gaps, the financial framework includes:	Clear priorities for spending, or a description of the process for determining spending priorities	†
	Implications in terms of results	4%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 10		27%

*Bold: Basic requirement. *See Criterion 12, #3.9 on whether criteria for allocating resources is discussed. † See Criterion 12, #3.9 on whether criteria for allocating resources is discussed.*

Checklist aspect		% of plans
Criterion 11: The national nutrition plan describes the mechanisms to allow the tracking of budget and expenditure data for nutrition across sectors and partners for decision making, oversight and analysis on nutrition finances.		
(#3.6) The plan describes a finance tracking mechanism that includes/will include:	Government budget funding across sectors ("on-budget")	42%
	Off-budget government funding	19%
	Tracking of allocations	31%
	Tracking of expenditures	23%
(#3.7) The plan's finance tracking mechanism describes the following assurance mechanisms:	Published independent external or internal audits	12%
	Parliamentary and/or citizens' oversight	0%
	Existing mechanisms for following up audit findings	0%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 11		15%
Criterion 12: The national nutrition plan describes how funds and resources will be deployed to sectoral budget holders, partners and to the subnational level.		
(#3.8) The plan's description of disbursement mechanisms includes:	Modalities for channeling and reporting on external funds (off-budget)	4%
	Disbursement mechanisms in nutrition-relevant sectors	0%
	Ways to ensure timely disbursements, efficient flow of funds, and/or to resolve bottlenecks	0%
	Subnational fund flow processes and oversight, with insight on efficiency and effectiveness (select "Yes" if no subnational system)	4%
(#3.9) The plan includes transparent criteria for the allocation of resources (across sectors, programmes, levels, and non-state actors) where appropriate.		23%
Criterion 13: The national nutrition plan describes the operational framework which includes the implementation arrangements, with detailed roles and responsibilities of the Government and partners.		
(#4.1) The operational framework includes a mapping of stakeholders and actions (i.e., for each action, the lead organisation and supporting organisations are listed).		50%
(#4.2) The plan describes how its strategic priorities are related to and linked to:	Sectoral plans from ministries/national programmes	65%
	Subnational plans	31%
	Plans of non-state actors	19%
(#4.2) The plan describes mutual accountability mechanisms between stakeholder groups (e.g. government departments, CSOs, private sector)		*
(#4.2) The plan describes a clear timeline that provides for the development of specific guidelines and annual operational planning		35%
(#4.3) The plan describes how (arrangements/mechanisms by which) different actors will work together to:	jointly target interventions to efficiently use resources	23%
	Consult with local actors	50%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 13		50%

Bold: Basic requirement. *See Criterion 16 on whether a review process is described and Criterion 6 for whether there are governance mechanisms.

Checklist aspect		% of plans
Criterion 14: The national nutrition plan describes the individual, organisational and institutional capacities (both functional and technical) required to implement planned actions and spells out how capacities will be strengthened.		
(#4.4) The plan describes the following types of capacity needed to implement the planned actions:	Individual	85%
	Organisational/ institutional	81%
(#4.4) The identified capacity strengthening needs demonstrate that they are based on	Review of functional, managerial, and technical capacities within and across relevant sectors	50%
	Review of delivery systems within and across relevant sectors	35%
	Capacity needs assessments, including human resource gaps	19%
(#4.5) The plan for capacity building includes:	Clearly defined milestones and timeframes	31%
	Required resources and funding sources	*
	Institutional arrangement for the training of new staff	23%
	Institutional arrangement for on-the-job training	23%
	Roles and responsibilities of government	*
	Roles and responsibilities of national academic institutions, CSOs, companies, and/or other partners	
(#4.6) The operational framework's plan describes approaches to meet the plan's technical assistance/expertise requirements, including:	Sourcing for in-country or external experts (where appropriate)	27%
	Required resources and funding sources	
	Roles and responsibilities of government	†
	Roles and responsibilities of national academic institutions, CSOs, companies, and/or other partners	
(Gender) The capacity assessment and/or capacity-building actions address the unique needs of men and women (e.g. addressing barriers to equal participation between women and men, measures to broadly integrate gender discussions).		5%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 14		88%

*Bold: Basic requirement. Orange: Gender-sensitive aspect not originally part of the NNP Checklist. *See Criterion 9, #3.1 on whether costs were calculated. †See Criterion 9, #3.1 on whether costs were calculated.*

Checklist aspect		% of plans
<i>Criterion 15: The national nutrition plan includes a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework that is sound, draws from sectors' M&E systems and includes core indicators; sources of information; methods and responsibilities for ethical data collection, management, analysis, quality assurance, learning and communication.</i>		
(#5.1) The plan includes:	Nutrition impact targets	*
	Expected results	
	Annual output targets for each planned action (e.g. intended coverage/reach)	19%
	Indicators that reflect international agreements (e.g. indicators in the Global Nutrition Monitoring Framework)	92%
(#5.2) The plan includes:	Nutrition-specific indicators: inputs, process, output, and/or outcome	77%
	Nutrition-sensitive indicators: inputs, process, output, and/or outcome	73%
	Equity indicators	35%
(Gender) The M&E framework includes gender equality indicators (e.g. household decision-making, empowerment, gender norms, resource control, gender-based violence, intervention beneficiaries)		64%
(#5.3) The M&E framework describes a data collection plan and includes:	Data sources and collection methods	65%
	Data gaps and measures to address those gaps	19%
	Information flows	62%
	Measures to strengthen routine and survey nutrition information systems	62%
	Description of how indicators are integrated into sectoral information and surveillance systems	46%
(Gender) The M&E framework's data collection plan includes disaggregation of data by sex to evaluate equity of the plan with respect to women, men, girls, and boys.		25%
(#5.4) The M&E framework describes a data analysis plan that includes	Description of the types of data analysis and evaluation to be performed	15%
	Data quality assurance mechanisms to support rigorous data analysis and evaluation	8%
(#5.5) The plan describes a coordination mechanism for M&E activities that includes:	Roles and responsibilities of government	73%
	Roles and responsibilities of partners	27%
	Actions for strengthening M&E capacity	65%
(#5.5) The operational framework includes milestones and time frames to finalize setting up of M&E work		38%
(#5.6) The plan identifies the multisectoral nutrition information platform in place, or to be developed, to support data analysis, knowledge management, learning and communication		65%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 15		58%

*Bold: Basic requirement; Orange: Gender-sensitive aspect not originally part of the NNP Checklist. * See Criterion 2 on results for expected results and impact targets.*

Checklist aspect		% of plans
Criterion 16: The national nutrition plan describes the mechanism for joint periodic performance reviews on nutrition to present programmatic and financial progress and for discussion on the findings for decision making and actions.		
(5.7) The plan describes how progress on the plan will be reviewed.		81%
(#5.7) The plan describes a multi-stakeholder review mechanism that includes	Feedback loops to identify corrective measures and financial adjustments	54%
	Participatory mechanisms to include all relevant stakeholders including local authorities and beneficiaries	31%
	Specification on how the review mechanism builds on existing sector reviews	19%
(#5.8) The M&E Framework describes the plan to communicate data, results and progress to stakeholders and beneficiaries.		*
(#5.9) The M&E Framework describes a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Conflict of Interest (Col) institutional framework and related processes for mutual accountability:		4%
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 16		54%
Criterion 17: The national nutrition plan sets out the processes and institutional arrangements for operational research (OR) and for the rigorous documentation and dissemination of good practices and lessons learned (including both successes and failures).		
(#5.10) The M&E Framework describes operational research priorities, including details on:	Roles and responsibilities of government	†
	Roles and responsibilities of partners, especially of national academic and research institutions	
	Mechanisms for coordination	35%
	Actions for strengthening capacity	27%
(#5.10) The operational framework includes milestones and timeframes to finalize the setting up of operational research work.		12%
	If so, is the work expected to be completed within the first year of the national plan?	8%
(#5.10) The financial framework includes operational research cost estimates.		23%
(#5.11) The M&E framework describes the processes for documenting and disseminating best practices and lessons learned.		§
Met basic characteristics for Criterion 17		35%

*Bold: Basic requirement. * See Criterion 15, #5.6 on whether an information platform was proposed. † See Criterion 13, #4.1 on whether roles and responsibilities were designated for each activity. § See Criterion 15, #5.6 on whether an information platform was proposed.*

About MQSUN+

MQSUN+ provides technical assistance and knowledge services to the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) and the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement Secretariat (SMS) in support of pro-poor programmes in nutrition. MQSUN+ services are resourced by a consortium of five nonstate organisations leading in the field of nutrition.

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