

ABSTRACT

Objective: Multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration for aligned implementation to scale up nutrition are hallmarks of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and have potential to reduce micronutrient deficiencies. This review assesses adequacy of micronutrient-related performance indicators in multi-sectoral monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks that accompany national nutrition action plans.

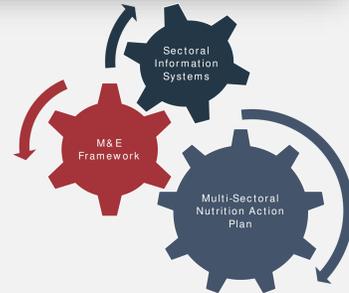
Methods: Micronutrient-related performance indicators from M&E frameworks in recently launched national nutrition action plans in one South Asian and three African SUN countries were mapped using the Lancet nutrition framework.

Results: All countries prioritized at least one micronutrient-specific nutrition outcome at the impact level, including reduction of anaemia in women (n=4) and children <5 years (n=2) as well as specific micronutrient deficiencies (folic acid, vitamin A, iodine, zinc in women and children, n=3). The health sector was responsible for tracking most micronutrient intervention coverage indicators but there were no infection-related indicators such as malaria control or deworming included. Other sector indicators focused on diet diversity (agriculture) and iron/folic acid supplementation to adolescent schoolgirls (education) but were not linked to indicators tracking increased micronutrient intake. Few specific and measurable indicators were included that assessed intermediate results of micronutrient interventions.

Conclusions: Although SUN countries have prioritized reduction of micronutrient deficiencies, recent M&E frameworks provide inadequate guidance on priorities for data collection to inform planning, budgeting and implementation. Further investment is needed to create an enabling environment for the design and monitoring of nutrition-specific and sensitive efforts to improve micronutrient-related outcomes. Increased awareness of non-health sectors on their contributions to micronutrient status is also needed.

BACKGROUND

- Strong information systems for nutrition are guided by strong monitoring & evaluation (M&E) frameworks.
- M&E frameworks are important components of national multi-sectoral nutrition action plans and help track progress toward national targets.
- Efforts to address micronutrient deficiencies benefit from multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder approaches.



Yet little is known about how well recent multi-sectoral national nutrition plans help different sectors monitor their progress toward reducing micronutrient malnutrition among target groups.

OBJECTIVE: This review assesses the adequacy of micronutrient-related performance indicators in multi-sectoral M&E frameworks that accompany national nutrition action plans.

METHODS

Nutrition International's **Technical Assistance for Nutrition (TAN)** project, supported through its **Nutrition Technical Assistance Mechanism (NTEAM)** aims to improve the capacity of SUN countries and support structures to design, implement and track progress of nutrition programmes. NTEAM conducted a review of emerging SUN country M&E frameworks to better understand their characteristics and how future technical assistance can help strengthen them.

Micronutrient-related performance indicators from M&E frameworks in recently launched national nutrition action plans in one South Asian and three African SUN countries were mapped using the Lancet nutrition framework. Country stakeholders were interviewed about the M&E framework design process.

RESULTS

USING PROGRAMME LOGIC MODELS TO TRACK PROGRESS

- All countries prioritized at least one micronutrient-related population nutrition status indicator (see Table 1)
 - Anaemia in women (4 countries) and children <5 years (2 countries)
 - Specific micronutrient deficiencies (e.g. folic acid, vitamin A, iodine, zinc in women and children, 3 countries)
- Micronutrient intake monitored by supplementation coverage and food consumption indicators (e.g. consumption of fortified foods)
- Few specific and measurable indicators to enable assessment of progress (or bottlenecks) along the results pathway
 - Unclear or incorrect sequence of results between activities and impact
- Gender equality indicators included only in 1 country (South Asia)
- Limited data availability – many indicators with no routine data source; heavy reliance on periodic national surveys

“No matter how good an indicator is, if you can't get that information, it does not serve its purpose.” (NITAN TA Provider)

TABLE 1: Mapping of micronutrient-related indicators in country M&E frameworks

Category	Indicator	COUNTRY				
		South Asia-1	Africa-1	Africa-2	Africa-3	
Nutrition Status	Anaemia in women	✓	✓	*	✓	
	Anaemia in children U5		✓		✓	
	MN deficiency	Vit A	Vit A, Zn, Iodine		Vit A, Zn, Iodine, Folic acid	
Immediate Determinants of Malnutrition	Malaria prevalence			✓		
	Diarrhoea prevalence	✓		✓		
	Exclusive breastfeeding	✓	✓	*	✓	
	Continued breastfeeding	✓			✓	
	Diet diversity, children 6-23m	✓	✓	*	✓	
	Diet diversity, women		✓	✓		
	Food insecurity	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Fortified food consumption	✓	✓		✓	
	Nutrient-dense food consumption	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	INTERVENTION COVERAGE	Deworming, school children		✓		
Zinc for diarrhea, children U5		✓				
Iodized salt		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Nutrition-specific		Iron supplements, PW	✓			✓
		Iron suppl, adolescent girls		✓	✓	
Nutrition-sensitive	Vitamin A supplements	✓	✓		✓	
	Micronutrient powders (MNP)	✓			✓	
	Acute malnutrition treatment	✓		✓	✓	
	IYCF counseling	✓				
	Food fortification	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	ANC visits	✓				
Underlying & Basic Determinants of Malnutrition	Family planning	✓				
	Vaccinations, children					
	Insecticide treated nets					
	Adolescent fertility, Early marriage,	✓				
	Girl child education					
Poverty levels	✓	✓				
Water, sanitation, hygiene	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Acronyms: ANC antenatal care, IYCF infant and young child feeding, MN micronutrient, PW pregnant women, U5 children <5 years
* Target indicator or intervention mentioned in nutrition action plan document but not specified in M&E Framework

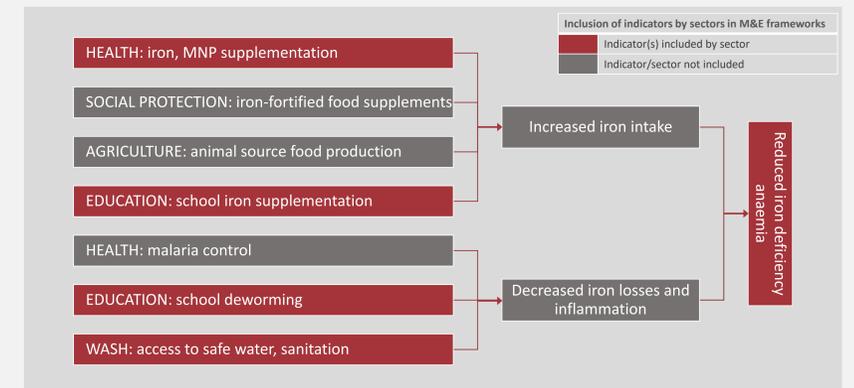
RESULTS

SECTORS WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE 'COMMON RESULTS'

“...we are still faced with the challenge of convincing other sectors to see nutrition as part of their role.” (NITAN TA Provider)

- Health sector tracks most micronutrient intervention coverage indicators
 - Only 2 of 4 countries included ANC iron supplementation coverage
 - No infection-related indicators included (malaria control, deworming)
- Other sectors monitor intervention coverage indicators BUT these are not linked to outcome indicators of increased micronutrient intake
 - Ministry of Education monitors school iron supplementation coverage but this is not linked in the M&E framework to increased iron intake outcome (Figure 2)

FIGURE 2: Multi-sectoral results framework for iron deficiency anaemia



CONCLUSION

- As SUN countries give greater priority to reducing micronutrient deficiencies, there is a **need for technical guidance on how to design and use M&E frameworks** as a tool for data collection to inform planning, budgeting and implementation, that considers political economy challenges.
- Further investment is needed to strengthen the **design and monitoring of nutrition-sensitive efforts to improve micronutrient-related outcomes**.
- Increased **awareness of non-health sectors on the contribution of their actions to improving micronutrient status** is still needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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