

Technical Assistance to the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Movement

The Technical Assistance to Strengthen Capabilities (TASC) project, funded by UK aid, responded to priority requests for support to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS) and to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) from September 2020 to July 2023. TASC was a follow-on TA facility from the Maximising the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Plus (MQSUN+ 2016-2020) within the broader Technical Assistance for Nutrition (TAN) programme. TASC initially had a duration of 15 months, from September 2020 to November 2021, but was extended to July 2023. The extension phase focused on direct support to FCDO only but also included follow-up tracking on earlier support to the SUN movement.

The TASC project responded to **17 requests** from the SUN Movement/FCDO to help maximise the quality and effectiveness of its nutrition-related policy and planning, to support evidence generation, lesson learning, and to develop nutrition capacity. Many of these deliverables are held in soft copy by the SUN country focal points (SUN FP), multisector platforms (MSP) and SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS). They are not available on the public domain but can be requested through the contact persons at the SMS or directly with the country SUN FPs.

The impact of each TASC assignment has been measured through follow-up tracking to understand how project outputs have been used to meet strategic objectives and contribute to improving nutritional outcomes. The impact of TA support (after three and six months) was tracked through interviews with the client and key stakeholders. This provided evidence of uptake through examples of dissemination (publishing guidance documents, developing communication products e.g. blogs) and follow-on workplans.

This brief describes the support provided to the SUN Movement aligned with the **four Strategic Objectives (SO) of the SUN Strategy 3.0:**

- SO 1 - *Strengthening and sustaining strong policy and advocacy environments at the sub-national, national, regional and global levels;*
- SO 2 - *Development of Country Priorities for Action;*
- SO 3 - *Capacity Strengthening for Nutrition;*
- SO 4 - *Support to SUN Governance.*

Technical assistance to the SUN Movement

3		Strengthen and sustain strong policy and advocacy
3		Development of Country Priorities for Action
5		Capacity Strengthening for Nutrition
6		Support to SUN Governance



SO1: Strengthen and sustain strong policy and advocacy environments at the sub-national, national, regional and global levels

This strategic objective (SO) aims to increase the likelihood of generating political capital and additional resources to accelerate nutrition improvement and ensure sustained, effective implementation. Knowing what it costs to implement identified priorities, the funding available, and the funding shortfall, helps advocacy for the required resources. Under SO1, TASC supported countries to participate in key political events as well as tracking budgets and analysing financial shortfalls to enable further resource mobilisation.

São Tomé and Príncipe support for the Food Systems Summit and the Nutrition for Growth event

Nutrition for Growth (N4G) is a global event bringing together governments, businesses, organisations, and individuals to make financial and political commitments toward ending malnutrition. TASC supported São Tomé and Príncipe in preparing commitments for the N4G event and creating a roadmap for the Food Systems Summit (UNFSS).



1 Country brief for the UNFSS

2 Draft N4G commitments



Impact

- São Tomé and Príncipe were able to present their draft Food Systems roadmap at the FSS.
- The N4G commitments have been validated by the SUN focal point on behalf of the Ministry of Health, and a roadmap has been developed to guide the implementation process.

Budget analysis

Recognised as a priority at the inception of the SUN Movement, the requirement to effectively monitor nutrition-specific and -sensitive investments remains crucial in ensuring that such funding is documented and targeted for maximum impact. Tracking budgets is essential for policymakers, as well as for citizens and donors. The assignment aimed to enhance the capacity of country teams and national experts to conduct a budget analysis of the nutrition plans and ensure their sustainability and applicability.



1 Somalia budget analysis (BA)

2 Training PowerPoints (Burkina Faso and Tajikistan)

3 Francophone webinar presentation



Impact

- Following the BA exercise, the Burkina Faso SUN team advocated for an increase in the State's contribution to nutrition from 1.11% in 2018 to at least 3% of the national budget by 2024.
- A National Nutrition Learning event was held under the Prime Minister's office, where TASC presented the results of Somalia's BA. Somalia has requested additional TA to enhance its capacity for independent BA execution.
- The SMS has created a SUN Finance Capacity Development Platform to assist with nutrition financing at the country level.
- Support to SUN countries (Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Burundi, Honduras, and Costa Rica) with BA training building on the existing workshop materials developed under MQSUN+ and TASC.

Guinea financial gap analysis

In 2019, the Government of Guinea pledged US\$1 million towards nutrition. However, the current financial resources are insufficient to meet the budgeted cost of the plan of US\$41.4 million. This assignment aimed to evaluate the gap between the budgeted cost of the plan and the committed resources and to support the planning of a Resource Mobilisation Round Table (RM RT) event aimed at raising funds to address the funding shortfall until 2023.



1 Financial analysis report and presentation

2 RM RT Roadmap



Impact

- This exercise supported stakeholders in the country to continue advocating for increased resources for implementing the Multisectoral Nutrition Plan (MSNP) up to 2023 and beyond.



SO2: Development of Country Priorities for Action

The second strategic objective aims to focus, catalyse and align the resources of the entire SUN Movement to deliver a manageable set of actions that advance the nutrition status of all, captured in national nutrition plans. Under this SO, TASC supported two countries to develop the next generation of their costed plans and provided recommendations to fourteen countries on how existing plans can be further strengthened.

National nutrition plan review

In December 2016, the United Nations (UN) SUN Network and the SMS and a group of experts developed and launched a checklist on the criteria and characteristics for ‘good’ national nutrition plans (NNPs). The checklist was intended to guide the development of new multisectoral nutrition plans and help with reviewing existing plans and other nutrition-related sectoral planning documents. TASC assisted SMS in reviewing the NNPs of thirteen countries using the SUN [Good Plans Checklist](#) with the objective of offering recommendations to these countries for enhancing their current or future NNPs. TASC also provided Madagascar with technical assistance to design its fourth NNP (PNAN IV) at the request of the country’s government.



1 Individual country briefs

2 [External summary report](#)

3 Draft Madagascar nutrition policy and nutrition plan



Impact

- The NNP review helped countries strengthen their national nutrition plans by guiding them in adopting a multisectoral approach to address malnutrition.
- For instance, Timor Leste integrated recommendations, and the government has committed US\$10 million towards the NNP in 2023 and plans to augment the nutrition budget further. A recently issued new decree provides legal recognition to the nutrition coordination unit and the stunting wing within the Office of the Prime Minister.
- Namibia has also incorporated all the recommendations of the NNP review into their national nutrition plans.
- In Madagascar, the national nutrition policy and nutrition action plan were finalised and validated in May 2022. The World Health Organization played an active role, and the national nutrition targets have been deemed attainable.

Gabon national nutrition plan and costing plan

Gabon became a member of the SUN Movement in December 2016 and launched its National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (PNSAN) 2017–2025 in 2017. To facilitate implementation, TASC assisted in-country stakeholders to finalise a costed action plan for the PNSAN 2017–2025 and reach agreement on how to implement it.



1 PNSAN 2017–2025

2 Completed budgeting framework

3 Roadmap and timetable for future action, post-assignment



Impact

- The action plan supports the implementation of Gabon’s National Food and Nutrition Security Policy 2017–2025.



SO3: Capacity Strengthening for Nutrition

The third strategic objective is to “Build and strengthen country capacity to develop, prioritise, finance, implement and track country actions through strengthened technical assistance and knowledge management”. This is key for ensuring that a country’s priorities as outlined in NNPs are implemented. TASC supported the development and dissemination of several tools to help TA providers and countries carry out certain tasks or increase knowledge of good practices. TASC also examined what makes effective TA.

Multisectoral platforms toolkit dissemination

The multisectoral platform (MSP) for nutrition toolkit supports multisectoral nutrition planning by offering countries a resource that leverages the knowledge and best practices gained through MQSUN and MQSUN+ (TASC’s predecessors). The toolkit assists countries in advancing nutrition through essential processes tailored to their specific contexts. This assignment aimed to improve the uptake and use of the MSP toolkit by relevant stakeholders.



1 **Toolkit dissemination webinar PowerPoint**

2 **Landing page on SUN website**



Impact

- The SUN toolkit is now accessible on the SUN Movement website with a dedicated landing page. Some country representatives who attended the webinar stated that they have been using the toolkit, which has helped them work through the process of setting up a national MSP.

Costing model

From the experience of MQSUN+ and TASC, many countries struggle to cost their NNPs and often rely heavily on external TA. It was acknowledged that a user-friendly, country-specific tool that defines objectives and terms, streamlines data collection, and uses transparent assumptions and methods would aid country-level stakeholders and planners in costing their multisectoral nutrition plans. TASC defined the scope of a tool for costing NNPs and developed a draft proposal with a workplan setting out the process for developing and rolling out the costing tool.



1 **Planning Report**

2 **Draft proposal for the implementation phase of the costing tool development**



Impact

- The costing model was used to guide the DI support to SUN country Sudan in late 2022 to conduct a costing readiness assessment.
- Given the strong feedback from the nutrition financing community that this tool is much needed, it is expected that future TA providers will continue its development, which could be taken on by the SUN Finance Capacity Development Platform.

Best practice case studies

In response to expressed needs of SUN member countries to learn and apply knowledge, the SUN Movement Secretariat’s country liaison team established an approach in late 2020 to identify, capture, classify, and share good practices and lessons learnt from member countries. This assignment enabled peer-to-peer learning among SUN member countries through four case studies on best practices and lessons learned.



Four case studies in English, French and Spanish:

1 **Digital Solutions** – Burkina Faso

2 **Nutrition Sensitive** – Kenya and Honduras

3 **Information Systems** – Peru, Burkina Faso, Vietnam and Indonesia

4 **Coordination** – Benin, Senegal and Burkina Faso



Impact

- All case studies are currently available on the SUN website. SMS is working towards expanding this collection by incorporating more good practice briefs and case studies.
- TASC consultants have used these best practice case studies to provide examples of good practice across countries whilst working on assignments especially those related to nutrition information systems.

Effectiveness of technical assistance

This assignment evaluated the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of MQSUN+'s TA design and provision. It also gained further insights into its uptake, continued usefulness, and value addition. Best practices and lessons learned were identified to inform future TA design and provision.

- 1 **Six country case studies** (Guinea, Honduras, Madagascar, Somalia, Tajikistan and Yemen)
- 2 **Synthesis report**
- 3 **TA guidance checklist**

Impact

- The case studies, synthesis reports and checklists have been widely disseminated through a webinar and uploaded to relevant platforms to facilitate access to and utilisation of findings for TA providers and those seeking TA.
- TASC consultants have used the principles outlined in the checklist when engaging with countries requesting TA support.

Functional capacity strengthening monitoring and evaluation

Capacity strengthening is a vital cross-cutting element in accelerating progress on multisectoral nutrition action at national and sub-national levels. The SMS and its partners developed a functional capacity-strengthening programme for SUN Focal Points (FPs). TASC monitored the training process and documented any resultant behaviour changes from nutrition leadership training for francophone Focal Points.

- 1 **A short report presenting findings from the end of the training evaluation**
- 2 **A report on interviews carried out after three months, drawing comparisons with findings from the end of training evaluation**

Impact

- The SMS is continuing the capacity strengthening of SUN FPs as detailed in the SUN 3.0 strategy, which emphasises the significance of creating a country-driven and country-led movement.
- Nutrition International has created an anglophone e-learning module, and SMS has initiated engagement with the launch. Regional leadership courses are being tested on a pilot basis, one per hub, for greater sustainability and wider access.



SO4: Support to SUN Governance

SUN Strategy 3.0 2021–2025 highlights that as the Movement has evolved, so too have its governance arrangements. As such, these governance structures must be effective whilst promoting country leadership and mutual accountability. TASC supported the implementation of SO4 through several assignments aimed at strengthening the identification of country priorities as well as monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning.

SUN 3.0 transition and support to SUN Operationalisation Group

TASC provided facilitation support to the SUN Executive Committee (ExCom) to deliver a final draft of the **SUN movement strategy 3.0 (2021 - 2025)** in December 2020. Following approval of the new strategy in January 2021, TASC continued to support the SUN Movement in its transition phase from SUN 2.0 to SUN 3.0 by providing change management and project management support to the SUN Operationalisation Group (SUN Ops), which was established to advise on and support the strategy roll-out. From the implementation recommendations, SUN Ops and the SMS identified key areas for TASC to continue supporting to ensure these principles were taken forward:

- i. TASC facilitated a consultation of key SUN members from SUN Ops, SMS, ExCom and SUN networks to identify and agree on **SUN monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) definitions of success and indicators**, to measure the SUN Movement's and member countries' progress on nutrition outcomes.
- ii. TASC assisted the SUN Movement in developing the **Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) and 360-degree survey** to reinforce multi-stakeholder decision-making and mutual accountability among partners at the national, regional and global levels.
- iii. TASC supported the development of the **Global Support System (GSS) joint log frame and workplan**, ensuring that it corresponds to the SUN 3.0 strategy and the overall log frame.



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| 1 Finalised SUN 3.0 strategy | 3 SUN MEAL draft indicators |
| 2 Report to the Sun Movement Lead Group on the implementation of the SUN Ops recommendations | 4 Mutual Accountability Framework and 360-degree Survey |
| | 5 GSS joint logframe and workplan |



Impact

- TASC TA support enabled the SUN 3.0 strategy to be finalised.
- The governance of ExCom has since been reformed with a new committee that started its term in October 2021.
- The recommendations were used to drive change in the SUN Movement to deliver SUN 3.0, emphasising improved governance, accountability and delivery arrangements that support country-level leadership.
- In November 2022, the MEAL Advisory Group, ExCom members, and GSS personnel reviewed, refined, and cleaned the **MEAL indicators and definitions of success**. In December 2022, the ExCom approved the indicators. A final review of these indicators is planned for 2024 as part of the broader SUN 3.0 evaluation.
- In September 2022, the **MAF** was approved in the ExCom Retreat, paving the way for its implementation, starting with a pilot in Yemen. **ExCom's 360-degree survey results**, presented at the March 2023 ExCom retreat, received positive feedback, with one member referring to them as illuminating. By 2025, 50% of the SUN countries are expected to participate in the mutual accountability process.
- The **GSS logframe** and budget (2021–2025) were needed to secure donor support for the SUN Movement, and the SMS has developed an action plan to be executed in late 2023. Emphasis is placed on triangulating data across all networks to guarantee a shared approach.

Joint annual assessment revision

The joint annual assessment (JAA) was identified as an under-utilised resource (JAA) during the SUN Movement's mid-term review (2017/18), whilst the strategic review (2019/20) highlighted the JAA's value in identifying country priorities and enhancing mutual accountability. This assignment aimed to investigate the achievements and obstacles linked with the JAA at the global and country levels, develop a revised JAA tool and guideline, and raise JAA awareness among countries through orientation sessions.



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| 1 Updated JAA tool, guidelines and frequently asked questions document | 2 Country orientation PowerPoint |
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Impact

- The JAA tool underwent revisions and was implemented in 2022, followed by further updates to selected sections and questions in 2023.
- The tool has been well received and was used by 58 countries in 2022, increasing to 61 in 2023.