



U.S. GOVERNMENT GLOBAL NUTRITION COORDINATION PLAN 2016–2021

**ANNUAL SUMMARY OF INTERAGENCY PROGRESS
(OCTOBER 2019–SEPTEMBER 2020)**



Cover photo

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ACRONYMS

CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
GFSS	Global Food Security Strategy
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
NCD	non-communicable diseases
NIH	National Institutes of Health
PEPFAR	U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
TWG	Technical Working Group
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture



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Almost half of under-five mortality is attributable to undernutrition. For children who do survive, their cognitive and physical development has been comprised. The U.S. Government has long been committed to improving nutrition throughout the world to save lives and ensure the prospects of future generations. The *U.S. Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan 2016–2021* was created to accelerate progress toward global nutrition goals, such as the World Health Assembly targets, by leveraging the vast breadth and depth of nutrition activities across the government. The Coordination Plan harnesses the power of investments through better communication and collaboration across U.S. Government agencies and departments and by linking research to program implementation. Eight agencies and departments are involved in the Coordination Plan: the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), Peace Corps, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Treasury, and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. This annual summary describes progress during the fourth year of implementation, from October 2019 to September 2020, including coordination efforts amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and plans for the coming year.

COVID-19

In 2019–2020, the COVID-19 pandemic sent shock waves throughout the globe, disrupting health, food, social, and economic systems, among others, and exacerbating all forms of malnutrition. As of July 2020, experts estimated that, without timely action, the global prevalence of child wasting could rise by 14.3 percent, leading to an additional 6.7 million children with wasting during the first year of the pandemic (Headey et al. 2020). The World Food Programme projected that the number of people in low- and middle-income countries facing acute food insecurity was expected to nearly double to 265 million by the end of 2020 (WFP 2020).

As U.S. Government agencies and departments mobilized for the domestic and international response, the Coordination Plan served as a forum for information sharing. In addition to sharing resources and updates within the sub-groups, the TWG held a meeting in June 2020 on how agencies and departments were adapting nutrition programming in light of COVID-19. Shawn Baker, USAID Chief Nutritionist, provided an overview of the USAID publication, [“COVID-19: Shocks on Nutrition and Potential Mitigation USAID Guiding Principles and Recommendations”](#) and described the risks of backsliding on nutrition gains. He also underscored the need to continue garnering political and financial support for nutrition as decision-makers focus on response and recovery. Dan Raiten from NIH and Mija-tesse Ververs from CDC informed the TWG about infant feeding research initiatives. For example, the COVID-19 Infant Feeding Research Interest Group, composed of domestic and global investigators, including Coordination Plan members from the NIH, CDC, and USAID, provides an informal venue for discussing the

evolving science, responses to the pandemic, and future directions. The group also serves as the sub-group focused on infant feeding for the WHO Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health COVID-19 Research Network and produces the repository [“COVID-19, Maternal and Child Health, and Nutrition – What Does the Science Tell Us?”](#) through Johns Hopkins University. CDC also worked with the Global Alliance for Vitamin A to adapt program guidance for distribution of high dose vitamin A supplementation for children 6–59 months of age during COVID-19.

“The COVID-19 crisis risks backsliding on nutrition gains with irrevocable impacts on mortality and lost potential. The crisis underscores why nutrition is a development imperative, and we need to continue to garner political and financial support for nutrition as decision-makers focus on response and recovery.”

—Shawn Baker, USAID Chief Nutritionist.

The Coordination Plan Secretariat Updates

The Coordination Plan technical working group (TWG) is composed of a secretariat, co-chairs, sub-groups, and sub-group co-leads (see Annex 1). A secretariat facilitator from USAID and three co-chairs, currently from MCC, USAID, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), provide overall leadership. USAID Advancing Nutrition, the Agency’s flagship multi-sectoral nutrition project, provides administrative, knowledge management, communications, and logistics support as the secretariat manager. Two co-leads from different agencies and departments lead each of the eight sub-groups:

- The First 1,000 Days
- Nutrition Information Systems
- Micronutrient Delivery Platforms
- Food Safety
- Nutrition-Related Non-Communicable Diseases
- Nutrition and Infectious Disease
- Global Food Security Strategy
- Implementation Science

Highlights from the secretariat this year included hosting an [information-sharing meeting](#) in November 2019 for senior government officials to share how the agencies and departments have generated and shared knowledge and evidence, progressed country-led efforts, and promoted nutrition leadership and partnerships. Senior officials—including Vikas Kapil from CDC, Douglas Balentine from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Colin McIlff from the HHS Office of Global Affairs, Lona Stoll from MCC, Shelley Smith from the Peace Corps, and Monique Wubbenhorst from USAID—briefed the nutrition community on interagency coordination under the Coordination Plan over the previous year and opportunities and plans for the future. Approximately 80 participants from the U.S. Government and civil society attended online or in person.

The secretariat also began developing the next 5-year Coordination Plan, given that the current plan ends in 2021. The secretariat formed a Drafting Committee and hired a senior facilitator and senior writer to lead the group. As an initial step, USAID Advancing Nutrition conducted a stocktaking exercise to investigate members' perspectives on the current Coordination Plan's



Photo by Toby Johnson, WorldFish.

achievements and recommendations going forward (see box). Committee members also worked with their agencies to identify their nutrition-related priorities and discussed the overall vision, purpose, and priorities. Over the coming year, the committee will finalize the plan and obtain agency clearances, with an anticipated start in 2022.

The secretariat also supported five webinars (described in subsequent sections); facilitated the co-chair, co-lead, and TWG meetings; and updated the Coordination Plan's [USAID webpage](#) and USDA National Agricultural Library [webpage](#).

The Coordination Plan stocktaking exercise centered on (a) the plan’s value and purpose and (b) the TWG structure and process. Highlights include:

- Members overwhelmingly noted the benefits of sharing information, strengthening professional relationships, and having technical exchanges across agencies and departments. One member noted, “Having such a diversity of experts brought together is particularly valuable. We hear different points of view we wouldn’t otherwise hear.”
- Some felt the original vision, while aspirational, needed greater resources and political will to be achieved.
- Members had mixed feedback about the TWG’s topic-based sub-groups. Members noted the positive contributions of devoted members and the sub-groups’ role as communities of practice. Some groups had imbalanced participation, though, and members suggested that the next 5-year plan consider restructuring to improve engagement and facilitate better information sharing on crosscutting themes.
- Members also suggested more exchanges with civil society, strengthening connections between domestic and global nutrition work, and greater engagement with agency and department senior leaders in the next 5-year plan.

Progress on Interagency Collaboration

During the 2019–2020 implementation year, the agencies and departments made progress toward the plan’s seven priority actions (see Annex 2), and the TWG continued promoting nutrition leadership and partnerships across U.S. Government agencies by creating opportunities for knowledge sharing and skill building. The following are examples of coordination efforts within four categories: knowledge-sharing events, interagency events and collaboration, global initiatives, and country-based initiatives.

Knowledge-Sharing Events

The TWG held seven technical webinars to promote knowledge sharing within the sub-groups and publicly. Links for the public webinars are included below and [here](#).

- In October 2019, the Nutrition and Infectious Diseases sub-group held an internal webinar for about 20 TWG members on “What to Do When There Are No Nutritional Guidelines in an Infectious Disease Outbreak Setting.” Mija-tesse Ververs from the CDC described the 2014 Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa in which little scientific evidence existed to develop nutrition guidelines for patients and the 2017 cholera outbreak in the Horn of Africa and Yemen in which protocols had not yet dealt with treating children with both cholera and severe acute malnutrition. The sub-group discussed ways in which the U.S. Government agencies could support work to address nutrition and infectious disease guideline development in such circumstances.
- In May 2020, the First 1,000 Days sub-group held an internal webinar for about 50 members on a topic of high interest across



Photo by Ana Christina Chaclán/Buena Milpa Project

the U.S. Government agencies and globally: the need for better understanding of stunting to assess the impact of interventions on child development and catch-up growth. Edward Frongillo from the University of South Carolina and Jef Leroy of the International Food Policy Research Institute defined stunting as an indicator and examined the use of linear growth to assess the impact of interventions on child development and growth. Dan Raiten from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Shawn Baker and Omar Dary from USAID also provided remarks.

- In celebration of World Food Safety Day, the Food Safety sub-group hosted an event for U.S. Government staff in June 2020 titled, “Transforming our Nation’s Food Safety System.” The event explored the implementation and impact of the

sweeping regulatory reform under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Experts from the FDA’s Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition and the University of Maryland’s Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition presented on the historic partnerships to promote produce safety through the implementation of FSMA’s Produce Safety Rule as well as practical efforts to monitor the impact of produce safety trainings on human health and livelihoods. Lee Gross from USDA presented on food safety capacity building worldwide. The event encouraged the U.S. Government to rededicate efforts towards a food system that improves public health and economic well-being.

- Approximately 250 participants attended the external webinar on [climate and the first 1,000 days](#) co-hosted by the First 1,000 Days

sub-group and the American Society for Nutrition in July 2020. Kristie Ebi from the University of Washington and Kartik Shankar and Nancy Krebs from the University of Colorado School of Medicine spoke about the intersection of climate and environmental change, food, nutrition, and health as they relate to maternal, infant, and child health. Ashley Aimone from Moi University in Kenya presented on integrating climate-related data into health surveillance.

- In July 2020, approximately 230 participants from within and outside the U.S. Government attended a webinar hosted by the Micronutrient Delivery Platforms and Nutrition Information Systems subgroups on [an impact evaluation of an integrated infant and young child feeding and micronutrient powder intervention](#) on micronutrient status in Eastern Uganda. Presenters shared an overview of the interventions and findings and discussed contextual factors that might explain program effectiveness. Maria Elena Jeffers from CDC moderated the panel of experts, which included Sarah Ngalombi from the Uganda Ministry of Health, Nicole Ford from CDC, Kathryn Dewey from the University of California-Davis, and Stanley Zlotkin from the University of Toronto.
- In July 2020, the Food Safety sub-group hosted an internal webinar on pandemics, food systems, and a proactive food safety approach to disease prevention and management. Prabhu Pingali from Cornell University and Anaka Aiyar from the University of Nevada-Reno described factors that led to recent large-scale pandemics, such as COVID-19, including inadequate food system safeguards, climate change, and antimicrobial resistance. The panelists advocated for integrating knowledge on

zoonotic diseases with food safety measures and refocusing policy priorities from disease control to prevention. Approximately 45 U.S. Government staff participated in the webinar.

- The Micronutrient Delivery Platforms and Nutrition Information Systems subgroups also held a webinar with approximately 190 participants in September 2020 on the [impacts and lessons from an integrated anemia control program in Ghana](#), which reached approximately 3 million adolescent girls with iron and folic acid tablets and health education. Sharing implementation experiences and program evaluation results, the speakers included Esi Amoafu Foriwa from the Ghana Health Service, Anthony Boateng from the Ghana Education Service, Ruth Situma from UNICEF Ghana, Mandana Arabi from Nutrition International, Lucas Gosdin from CDC, and Yaw Addo from CDC.

Interagency Collaboration

Collaboration across the agencies continued this year and resulted in rich information exchanges. The following are examples.

- The Implementation Science sub-group explored connections with the U.S. Government's Interagency Committee on Human Nutrition Research and continued collaborating with the Society for Implementation Science for Nutrition to share best practices to link research to nutrition programs. The sub-group also connected with the new Feed the Future interagency group focusing on research more broadly, including implementation science.
- The Implementation Science sub-group discussed an opportunity developed by the NIH to support research on childhood obesity prevention using implementation science. Members drafted an article on



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implementation science and childhood obesity prevention in Latin America and among Latino populations in the U.S.

- Per the U.S. Government's Open Data Policy codified into [law](#) in 2019, U.S. Government agencies working in global nutrition must make nutrition data publically available in machine-readable formats, maintain comprehensive data catalogs, and designate a nonpolitical chief data officer. Coordination Plan agencies and departments publish nutrition data according to their open data initiatives, described in these links: [MCC](#), [HHS](#), [Peace Corps](#), [USAID](#), [USDA](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), and [U.S. Department of Treasury](#). The following are examples of nutrition data sharing from Coordination Plan agencies.

- MCC independently evaluates every project and [publishes the results on its website](#). *In 2020, MCC published the [endline results](#)*

[and associated data](#) for the \$120 million Indonesia Community-Based Health and Nutrition project investment.

- The U.S. Department of Treasury conducts its work on food security and nutrition primarily through the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program. They work with those institutions and USAID to determine the data to report to the [Feed the Future Monitoring System](#). Peace Corps also reports nutrition data through the Feed the Future Monitoring System.

Coordination with Global Nutrition Initiatives

U.S. Government agencies coordinated participation in global nutrition initiatives through the TWG, leading to a more



Photo by USAID

harmonized government approach, as described by the following examples.

- Coordination Plan members were part of the planning committee for the Micronutrient Forum 5th Global Conference, which was originally planned as an in-person event in March 2020 but was reprogrammed as a virtual event in November 2020. The conference is an opportunity for the research, clinical, program, policy, and private sector communities to discuss micronutrient nutrition to achieve optimal health.
- Following efforts from the previous year, the Global Food Security Strategy sub-group members coordinated U.S. Government feedback on the draft *Committee on World Food Security Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition* and participated in an initial round of negotiations. The guidelines aim to improve policy fragmentation among the food, agriculture, and health sectors.
- Global Food Security Strategy sub-group members helped prepare for the Food Systems Summit 2021, which aims to raise global awareness and ensure commitments and actions to transform food systems to eradicate hunger and reduce diet-related diseases.
- Coordination Plan members were part of the planning committee or the 5th Global Conference of the Micronutrient Forum, which took place in November 2020. The conference is an opportunity for the research, clinical, program, and private sector communities to discuss micronutrient nutrition to achieve optimal health.
- Coordination Plan members have been working with the SUN Donor Network to

develop and finalize a handbook on the use of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nutrition policy marker, a new qualitative process for identifying donor investments with nutrition objectives. USAID has also initiated research to guide the application and interpretation of the nutrition policy marker to quantify investments across U.S. Government agencies and other donors.

Coordination with Country-Based Nutrition Initiatives

Through the Coordination Plan, the U.S. Government has maximized its country-based initiatives by facilitating communication and collaboration.

- Global Food Security Strategy sub-group members built on previous years' activities by supporting the implementation of country strategies, resulting in increased transparency and coordination and accelerating impact.
- Nutrition Information Systems sub-group members continued supporting the Guatemala Epidemiological Surveillance System for Health and Nutrition and the nutrition module of the Uganda National Panel Survey to help meet the information needs of government and partners. Members of the sub-group also participated in workshops focused on the use of data for decision-making.
- Nutrition Information Systems and Micronutrient Delivery Platforms sub-group members supported the government and stakeholders in Rwanda and Tanzania to integrate modules on micronutrient status into the Demographic and Health Surveys and provided technical support to laboratories carrying out micronutrient



Photo by USAID

analyses. Sub-group members also supported a comprehensive national micronutrient survey in Burkina Faso in early 2020.

Priorities and Plan for 2021

In 2021, the Coordination Plan will continue building upon the U.S. Government's nutrition leadership and partnerships through the TWG, including sharing resources and coordinating responses on COVID-19. Members will remain actively engaged in preparing for global milestone events including the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021, the Food Systems Summit 2021, the Micronutrient Forum 2020, and the Second Global Summit on Food Fortification 2020. The sub-groups will maintain regular meetings and initiatives, such as follow up to the surveys that the Nutrition Information Systems subgroup is supporting and the execution of a survey on nutrition and implementation science across federal agencies that the Implementation Science sub-group is supporting. Finally, as mentioned, a significant focus of the secretariat and Coordination Plan members will be supporting the Drafting Committee to finalize the next 5-year Coordination Plan, which will begin in 2022.



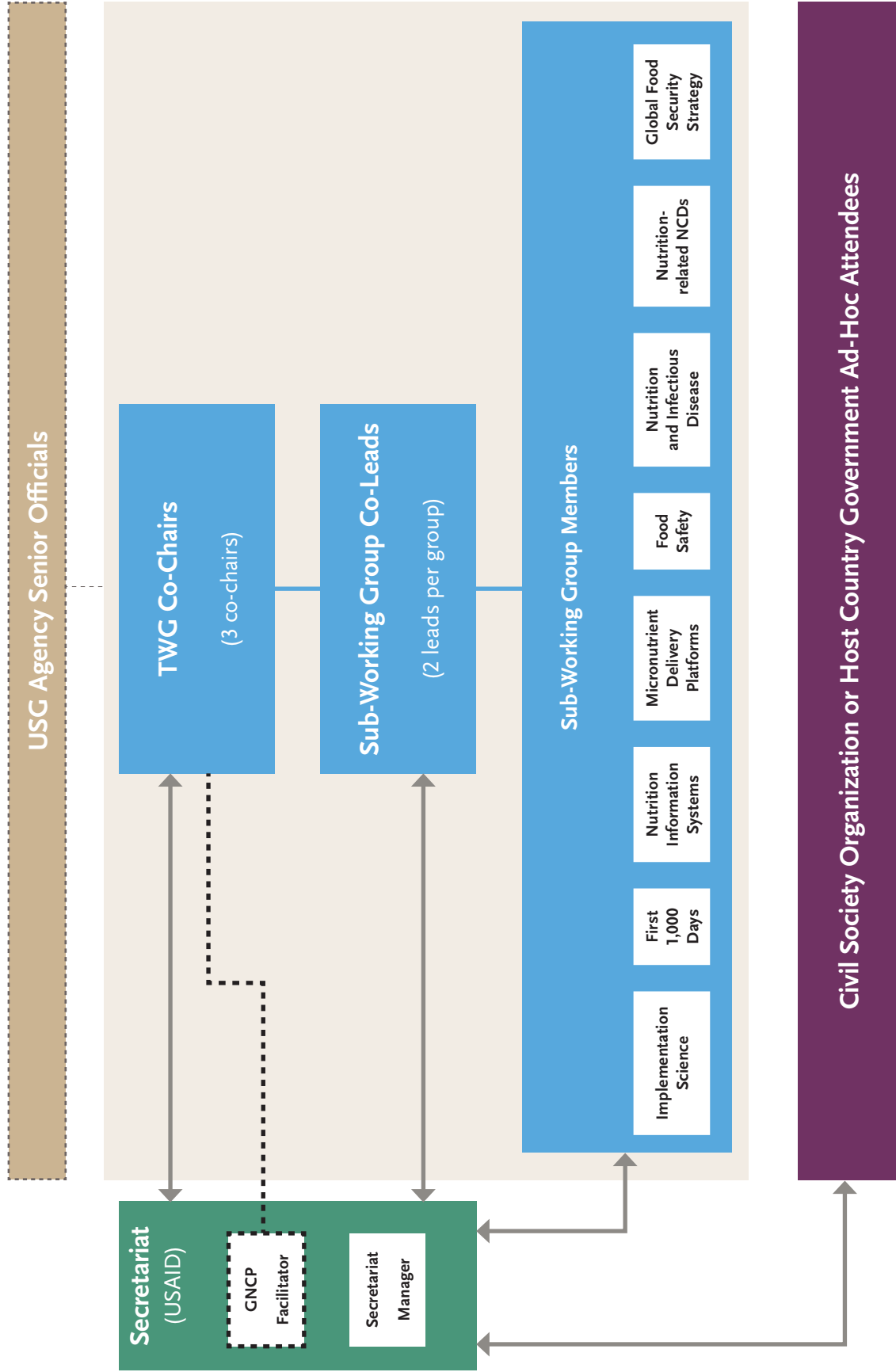
Credit: LWR/Brenda Kimaro

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The World Food Programme. April 2020. “COVID-19 will double the number of people facing food crises unless swift action is taken.” News release: <https://www.wfp.org/news/covid-19-will-double-number-people-facing-food-crises-unless-swift-action-taken>

Annex 1. U.S. Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan Technical Working Group Structure



Secretariat

Facilitator: Kellie Stewart, USAID

Managers: Tina Lloren and Kelly McDonald, USAID Advancing Nutrition

TWG co-chairs

Rafael Flores-Ayala, CDC

Carolyn Wetzel Chen, MCC

Elaine Gray, USAID

Sub-working group co-leads

Implementation Science

Susan Vorkoper, NIH

Yibo Wood, USDA

Food Safety

Ahmed Kablan, USAID

Lee Gross, USDA

The First 1,000 Days

Lindy Fenlason, USAID

Dan Raiten, NIH

Nutrition and Infectious Disease

Mija-tesse Ververs, CDC

Dan Raiten, NIH

Tim Quick, USAID

Nutrition Information Systems

Maria Elena Jefferds, CDC

Rafael Flores-Ayala, CDC

Nutrition-Related Non-Communicable Diseases

Gabrielle Lamourelle, HHS Office of Global Affairs (HHS/OGA)

Micronutrient Delivery Platforms

Maria Elena Jefferds, CDC

Omar Dary, USAID

Global Food Security Strategy

Ingrid Weiss, USAID

Annex 2. Progress toward the Seven Priority Actions in the U.S. Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan 2016–2021

Through the Coordination Plan, the U.S. Government holds itself accountable for seven coordination actions. These actions provide a backbone for collaborative U.S. Government nutrition programming. Progress towards the actions is as follows.

Action	Status as of September 2020
Action #1: Create a permanent, government-wide Global Nutrition Technical Working Group to serve as a leader and convener for action and information-sharing regarding U.S. Government global nutrition programs.	Completed. The Technical Working Group functions as the operational body of the Coordination Plan.
Action #2: Release an annual summary of interagency progress under the U.S. Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan.	Completed. This report is the fourth annual summary, corresponding to the fourth year of implementation.
Action #3: Produce a U.S. Government report at the end of a 5-year cycle on U.S. Government contributions toward the World Health Assembly Nutrition Targets and other U.S. Government global nutrition commitments.	The secretariat will complete this action in Year 5.
Action #4 Develop a process to gather and report interagency information on annual U.S. Government nutrition resource expenditures.	Completed and ongoing. U.S. Government agencies and departments continue to collate and report nutrition resource disbursements annually, using adapted guidelines based on the SUN Donor Network methodology. TWG members are working with the network to apply and research the use of the new OECD nutrition policy marker to quantify investments.
Action #5 Form a U.S. Government Global Nutrition Implementation Science Sub-Working Group that can interact with the existing Interagency Committee on Human Nutrition Research (ICHNR) and share best practices to link research to nutrition programs	Partially completed. The TWG formed the Implementation Science sub-group in the first year of implementation. The sub-group explored linkages with the ICHNR in 2020; it will continue discussions in 2021.
Action #6 Make U.S. Government nutrition data openly available in accordance with the U.S. Government open data initiative	Completed and ongoing. All agencies and departments have open data initiatives and publish nutrition data.
Action #7: Establish points of contact within each U.S. Government agency participating in the U.S. Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan and at each international U.S. post with more than one U.S. Government agency engaged in nutrition-related programming	Partially completed. The TWG has points of contact within each participating agency and department, but not international U.S. posts.

The U.S. Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan (GNCP) 2016–2021 is an interagency effort to strengthen both domestic and international nutrition interventions, thereby ensuring efficient and effective use of American investments. The GNCP aims to harness the power of the many diverse investments across the U.S. Government through better communication and collaboration and by linking research to program implementation. By embracing cross-U.S. Government partnerships and coordination, the impact of resources can be enhanced to improve nutrition worldwide.

Learn more at www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/global-health/nutrition/usgplan