



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

# FIVE-YEAR SUMMARY OF INTERAGENCY PROGRESS (2016–2021)



**Cover photo**

Photo by Ric Francis for Feed the Future

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## ACRONYMS

BOND-KIDS	-----	Biomarkers of Nutrition For Development: Knowledge Indicating Dietary Sufficiency
BRINDA	-----	Biomarkers Reflecting Inflammation and Nutritional Determinants of Anemia
CDC	-----	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
COVID-19	-----	Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2)
DFC	-----	U.S. International Development Finance Corporation
FAO	-----	Food and Agriculture Organization
FAS	-----	Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA)
FDA	-----	U.S. Food and Drug Administration
FNS	-----	Food and Nutrition Service (USDA)
GAFSP	-----	Global Agriculture and Food Security Program
GNCPP	-----	U.S. government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan
HHS	-----	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HHS/OGA	-----	Health and Human Services Office of Global Affairs
IFAD	-----	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ICHNR	-----	Interagency Committee on Human Nutrition Research
IMMPaCt	-----	International Micronutrient Malnutrition Prevention and Control Program
MCC	-----	Millennium Challenge Corporation
N4G	-----	Nutrition for Growth
NICHD	-----	<i>Eunice Kennedy Shriver</i> National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NIH	-----	National Institutes of Health
OECD	-----	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
P/B-24	-----	Pregnancy and Birth to 24 months research project
PEPFAR	-----	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PRICE	-----	Protein in a Changing Environment
RUTF	-----	Ready-to-use therapeutic food
SUN	-----	Scaling Up Nutrition Movement

TWG----- Technical Working Group  
UNICEF ----- United Nations Children’s Fund  
USAID ----- U.S. Agency for International Development  
USDA----- U.S. Department of Agriculture  
WFP----- World Food Programme  
WHO -----World Health Organization  
WIC -----Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (USDA)  
WHA ----- World Health Assembly



Photo by Alex Maina for USAID

## INTRODUCTION

**T**he first U.S. government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan was launched in June of 2016 and came to conclusion in September 2021. Its inception reflected a recognition of the central importance of nutrition to saving lives and improving the prospects of future generations of children around the world, and the potential to enhance U.S. government contributions to the global efforts to these ends. Its purpose was to strengthen the impact of the many diverse investments in global nutrition from across the U.S. government through better communication and collaboration among government nutrition experts, and by efforts to link research to program implementation. The principal goal was to contribute to accelerating progress towards the six 2025 Global Nutrition Targets (see Box 1) and other U.S. government global nutrition commitments, such as commitments made at the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summits in 2013 and 2017.

### Box 1. 2025 Global Nutrition Targets

1. Achieve a 40% reduction in the number of children under-5 who are stunted
2. Achieve a 50% reduction of anemia in women of reproductive age.
3. Achieve a 30% reduction in low birth weight.
4. Ensure that there is no increase in childhood overweight.<sup>i</sup>
5. Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50%.
6. Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%.

Source: <https://www.who.int/teams/nutrition-and-food-safety/global-targets-2025>

Photo by Preston Keres for USDA

i Overweight in children under 5 years: weight-for height  $\geq +2$  standard deviations from 2006 WHO growth standards median.

Eight departments and agencies signed onto the 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. The Plan originally identified six technical focus areas where U.S. government investments make the greatest contribution to

the global nutrition goals,<sup>1</sup> but these evolved over the course of implementation into eight working group themes: 1) Implementation Science; 2) Food Safety; 3) The First 1,000 Days; 4) Nutrition and Infectious Diseases; 5) Nutrition Information Systems; 6) Nutrition-Related Non-Communicable Diseases; 7) Micronutrient Delivery Platforms; and 8) Global Food Security Strategy. In advancing coordination in these areas, the Plan defined three “Action Areas:” 1.) Support country-led efforts; 2) Promote leadership and partnership; and 3) Generate, share, and apply knowledge and evidence.

The U.S. government recognizes that investing in nutrition returns the highest dividends in both human and economic development. Each dollar spent on evidence-based nutrition programming is estimated to return \$16 in increased workforce productivity and reduced health care expenditures.<sup>2</sup> Harder to capture, yet equally compelling, is the impact on the lifelong wellbeing of the children and families benefitting from investments in nutrition. These investments from global partners, including the United States, combined and in collaboration with local and regional governments and organizations, have helped to reduce the prevalence of stunting<sup>i</sup> among children under five years of age from 33.1 percent globally in 2000 to 22 percent in 2020,<sup>3</sup> and wasting<sup>ii</sup> from 8.6 percent in 2012 to 6.7 percent in 2020.<sup>4</sup> An analysis of data from Demographic and Health Surveys conducted across 55 low and middle income countries between 1990 and 2018 shows a more mixed picture for women: underweight<sup>iii</sup> declined in

i **Stunting:** weight/length-for-age among children under 5 years  $\leq -2$  standard deviations from 2006 WHO growth standards median. Children too short for their age.

ii **Low weight-for-height** defined as more than 2 standard deviations below the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards and/or mid-upper arm circumference of  $<125$  mm. **Low weight-for-height** defined as more than 2 standard deviations below the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards and/or mid-upper arm circumference of  $<125$  mm. Wasting is usually the result of a recent, acute deprivation and/or illness, and is strongly linked to mortality. It is one type of acute malnutrition, the other being bipedal edema.

iii **Underweight** in women of reproductive age: body mass index (kg/m<sup>2</sup>) [among non-pregnant] women  $<18.5$ .



Photo by Preston Keres for USDA

almost two-thirds of these countries but increased in the rest, while overweight<sup>iv</sup> increased in over 90 percent.<sup>5</sup> And anemia in women of reproductive age has actually increased.<sup>6</sup>

This five-year summary report describes the achievements on the seven priority coordination actions of the Plan, defined as the backbone

for collaborative U.S. government nutrition programming. The Plan received no additional funding to invest in new activities, but was instead propelled by the dedication of staff from the participating departments and agencies to the larger goals of improving nutrition and fighting hunger throughout the world.

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iv **Overweight** in women of reproductive age: body mass index (kg/m<sup>2</sup>) [among non-pregnant] women  $\geq 25$

## YEAR FIVE OVERVIEW

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic, which began midway through the Plan’s fourth year, continued throughout year five to exact a toll on health systems, food systems, and economies, leading to large increases in poverty and food insecurity, maternal and child malnutrition, and mortality,<sup>7</sup> and the numbers of households unable to afford a diet to meet their nutrient requirements.<sup>8</sup> Even before this global crisis, no country was on track to achieve all of the Global Nutrition Targets, and almost half were not on track to achieve a single target.<sup>9</sup> The urgency of mobilizing support from the global community both to prevent reversals of recent gains in nutrition and to ensure that more countries accelerate progress towards these targets was a frequent theme in discussions in Global Nutrition Coordination Plan platforms. During a [public consultation](#) in December 2020 with the Senior Nutrition Champions, U.S. government senior staff promoting nutrition issues at the highest levels, who had just been nominated by each participating government institution to serve under the next five-year Plan, USAID Chief Nutritionist Shawn Baker warned that the disruption in all the systems needed to deliver good nutrition could wipe out a decade or more of progress unless bold action was taken. He called 2021 a “make-or-break” year for global nutrition and an opportunity for the United States to help galvanize global commitment and action to meet the moment.

Considerable time and effort was devoted during this final year of the plan (October 2020-September 2021) to draw from the experiences, successes, and challenges of the first Plan to design a new five-year Plan to cover 2021-2026. Two representatives each from the following government agencies and departments agreed to participate in drafting the second – MCC; Peace Corps; USAID; USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Office of the Chief Scientist; HHS’ Office of Global Affairs, CDC, FDA and NIH; State Department, and a new member in the Development Finance Corporation (DFC), as well as additional volunteers from many of these organizations, served on

the Drafting Committee, and participated in a total of 22 meetings to provide input on the contents. A subset of this Drafting Committee participated in seven additional ad hoc working groups to articulate the new Plan’s vision statement, purpose, and program priorities, as well as to conceive a revised structure, results, and metrics for tracking progress under the new Plan. In addition to the many meetings, there were multiple drafts for these officials to review and revise.

The new Plan was also shaped by the lessons from an internal stocktaking assessment conducted during year four of the Plan (and described in the [fourth annual summary](#)),



Photo by CRS Heidi Yanulis Photography

which drew on interviews with 22 individuals involved in the design or implementation of the first plan. The interviews confirmed the value of the structure created under the Plan as a platform for sharing information and expertise across global nutrition themes and government offices that were otherwise not often involved in the global nutrition dialogue, and for stimulating new collaborations (described further under Action 1 below). They also pointed to the need for restructuring to improve technical sharing across Sub-Working Groups (see Annex 1) and to strengthen the engagement of senior leadership.

The proposed new framework for the Plan (see Annex 2) focuses the considerable technical, financial, and convening capacity of the U.S. government on five program priorities and one

cross-cutting priority relating to policy initiatives, all targeting points in the life cycle when malnutrition causes the most damage and on which global progress has been slowest. It also applies a systems approach, recognizing that nutrition is shaped by myriad systems – including food, health, water and sanitation, education, environment, and social protection – as well as their complex interactions and interconnections. Under the new Plan, a few of the Sub-Working Groups and new, *ad hoc* Sub-Working Groups will convene as needed to achieve specific objectives, and all members will meet regularly as a whole. Importantly, the second Plan adds a Senior Nutrition Champions Group representing high-level leadership so that global nutrition priorities get the attention of decision-makers, as well as technical experts.

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND IN ADVANCING GLOBAL NUTRITION

**W**hile the purpose of the Global Nutrition Coordination Plan focused on strengthening communication and collaboration among the participating departments and agencies in order to enhance the impact of U.S. government investments, the measures of its achievements, in particular for Coordination Action 3, were defined to encompass the U.S. government contributions and commitments to global nutrition more broadly. In that spirit, descriptions in this report are not confined to examples of coordination and collaboration, but also capture some of the important programs implemented by Plan member organizations. As it is not possible to include an exhaustive description of all U.S. government contributions to global nutrition, the report instead highlights some salient examples. What follows is a description of achievements under the seven coordination actions for which the U.S. government agreed to hold itself accountable.

### **Action 1: Create a permanent interagency global nutrition technical working group (achieved)**

This first coordination action was achieved in year one of the Plan. Since then, the structure of the Technical Working Group (TWG) has been consolidated, and leadership has rotated among participating agencies and departments (see Annex 2). In year three, USAID Advancing Nutrition, USAID's flagship, multi-sectoral nutrition project, assumed responsibility for providing administrative, knowledge management, communications, and logistics support to the Secretariat (comprised of the Facilitator and three co-chairs) and to the Sub-Working Groups. TWG Co-Chair rotations included representatives from USDA, Peace Corps, Millennium Challenge Corporation, USAID and CDC, with a USAID representative serving as Facilitator to provide overarching strategic guidance.

The original focus area of Food Fortification broadened into the Micronutrient Delivery Platforms Sub-Working Group. Nutrition and HIV expanded to encompass Nutrition and Infectious Diseases, and Sub-Working Groups on Implementation Science and on Global Food Security Strategy were added. All of the Sub-Working Groups have members from multiple agencies and departments, thus offering the potential to serve as platforms for information sharing and relationship building.

Many of the Sub-Working Groups met regularly across the five years, with activity in each peaking when clear outputs were defined. For example, in year two, the Nutrition and Non-Communicable Diseases Sub-Working Group shared with global nutrition colleagues highlights from the newly released Second Edition of the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* (2018) and the update to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (2020-2025) with its first ever recommendations for pregnant

women and children from birth to 24 months of age. Nutrition and Non-Communicable diseases collaborated with the First 1,000 Days Sub-Working Group on an event focused on the implications of nutrition during the first 1,000 days for risks for non-communicable diseases. As noted in the [second annual report](#), overseas staff participated in the live event while others were able access a recording of the presentations.

The establishment of the Global Nutrition Coordination Plan interagency platform in 2016 helped lay the foundation for implementing the nutrition objective under the [2017-2021 U.S. government Global Food Security Strategy that followed soon after](#). Work under the Global Food Security Strategy Sub-Working Group in year one of the Plan contributed to the development of the *Global Food Security Strategy Nutrition Technical Guidance* and reviews of individual country strategies. The Sub-Working Group then passed its portfolio to the Feed the Future Global Engagement Working Group, which consolidated U.S. government feedback on the United Nations Committee on World Food Security (CFS) [Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition](#). These guidelines are intended to promote policy coherence among the multiple sectors involved in strengthening food systems, including agriculture, health, and environment.

The Food Safety Sub-Working Group has remained active across the five years, drawing on expertise from FDA, USDA, and USAID to strengthen animal and plant health and food safety measures in low-income countries. These measures protect human nutrition and health and support producers to meet global sanitary and phytosanitary standards. The activities included public events, the development of a food technology brief, and promot-

ing use of the resources available from the U.S. government [Food Safety Network](#). The members of this Sub-Working Group have expressed their commitment to continue this work under the follow-on Plan.

Also both active on its defining themes as well as in collaborating with other Sub-Working Groups was the First 1,000 Days Sub Working Group. Public [webinars](#) were held to spotlight critical issues, notably, new thinking about the value of stunting as an impact indicator for public health projects given the complex and multi-sectoral nature of its determinants, and the multiple ways climate change may undermine health and nutrition during this vulnerable period, increasing vector-borne diseases; water, air, and land degradation; and agricultural production disruptions; and potentially reducing the nutrient density of key food crops. They joined forces with the Nutrition and Infectious Diseases Sub Working Group to explore the intersection of poor hygiene and sanitation, infectious diseases, and child growth, and with the Food Safety Sub Working Group on two [webinars](#) delving into the links between mycotoxin exposure and nutritional status in pregnant women, infants, and young children.

Across Sub-Working Groups, relationships forged have created new opportunities for collaboration discussions between MCC and USDA members of the First 1,000 Days Working Group resulted in the sharing of policy guidelines from [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\)](#) with the Government of Indonesia. A Senior USAID Nutrition Advisor joined the Federal Interagency Iodine Working Group to bring learnings from the global effort into the discussions. These offer just a few examples of important alliances that were formed as a result of the Global Nutrition Coordination Plan.

## **Action 2: Release annual summary of progress (achieved)**

Annual summary reports describing key activities from the previous year were published for the first four years of the Plan. This five-year summary report includes activities in year five.

## **Action 3: Summary Report on USG contributions toward Global Nutrition targets and other U.S. government nutrition commitments within and beyond the Global Nutrition Coordination Plan (achieved)**

This report highlights some key examples of the many contributions of the U.S. government toward advancing the Global Nutrition targets and other U.S. government nutrition commitments. U.S. government global nutrition efforts have been ongoing for decades, and many span years both before and after the start and end dates of the Global Nutrition Coordination Plan. These contributions include direct financial investments, mobilized financial investments from other public and private sources, technical expertise, policy and advocacy support, and project activities distributed across scores of countries and intervening at national, regional, district, or community levels. In addition, these contributions include research and the dissemination of findings from across the spectrum of inquiry, from basic research to implementation science.

The U.S. Congress passed the Global Food Security Act (P.L. 114-195) just as this first Global Nutrition Coordination Plan was being launched. The law catalyzed the development of the first Global Food Security Strategy and secured funding for multi-sectoral nutrition interventions implemented through the Feed the Future initiative. In the words of Dr. Jim Barnhart, Feed the Future's Deputy Coordinator for

Development, "Feed the Future has brought the best of American ingenuity and generosity to bear to target the root causes of poverty and food insecurity to end global hunger – one of the greatest challenges and opportunities of our lifetime."<sup>10</sup> Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, its programs have continuously adapted to respond to and mitigate the impact on food systems. Data from the interagency Feed the Future initiative indicates that over the last decade,<sup>11</sup> an estimated 3.4 million more children are not stunted and at least 170 million children under five were reached with nutrition-specific interventions.<sup>12</sup>

The U.S. government has also been a leading voice within the global community for funding and coordinating nutrition efforts, spearheading the creation of and pledges to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP),<sup>13</sup> mobilizing donor support for replenishments of the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), participating at the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) pledging summits, facilitating dialogues leading up to and participating in the UN Food Systems Summit, and serving as one of the founding members of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, and actively participating in the Global Action Plan for Child Wasting (GAP) process— among many other contributions. Treasury and the State Department have played an important role in these forums. USAID leadership served on the SUN Movement Executive Committee, and currently serves on the SUN Donor Network, and as the SUN Donor Convener in six SUN Countries. Multiple U.S. government departments and agencies also contributed to the third SUN Movement strategy, the UN Food Systems Summit, and the Nutrition for Growth Year of Action. Through the State Department,



Photo by US Embassy Un Yarat

the U.S. is a member of the Advisory Committee for UN Food Systems Summit, convened in 2021 “to transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food”.<sup>14</sup>

During the life of the first Plan, the MCC committed \$120 million to a Community-Based Health and Nutrition to Reduce Stunting Project in Indonesia, which reached 11 of the country’s 34 provinces. The investment supported the government’s strategy to build demand for nutrition and health services at the community level, strengthen capacity to enable health providers to deliver quality nutrition services, and develop national and sub-national social and behavior change communications campaigns. An MCC-funded, randomized control trial found the project achieved a 20 percent increase in exclusive breastfeeding in intervention compared to control communities,

but no significant reduction in the prevalence of stunting, wasting, or low birthweight. The evaluators pointed out that the project was implemented “against a backdrop of great national momentum towards reducing stunting and widespread improvements in key maternal and child indicators,” through which stunting was reduced from 37 to 31 percent nationwide over the same time period. The evaluation also drew lessons about gaps in the delivery of activities and services, challenges the Global Nutrition Coordination Plan Implementation Science sub-working group spotlighted in a webinar (described further below under Action 5) as common to most public health interventions.

Until COVID-19 forced the return to the U.S. of its nearly 7,000 volunteers in March of 2020, the Peace Corps had around 1,400 Volunteers deployed across 33 countries supporting

health projects, most of which incorporated aspects of nutrition with a focus on pregnant women and children under five. These Volunteers implement activities at the community, service provider, and household levels, using behavior change communications and other evidence-based strategies to promote adoption of the Essential Nutrition Actions.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, nearly 700 agriculture Volunteers in 17 countries worked with smallholder farming households to improve household food security and nutrition outcomes. Peace Corps' nutrition-sensitive agriculture activities target women of reproductive age and infants under 5 and combine nutrition education with promotion of improved agricultural production practices, particularly household gardens, to increase availability of and/or access to diverse, nutrient-rich foods. The Peace Corps is in the process of returning Volunteers to host countries.

In addition to its commitment to the Global Nutrition Coordination Plan, USAID has elevated nutrition as an agency priority, as articulated in [USAID's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014-2025](#). Building on [five decades of global leadership in nutrition](#), USAID aims to maximize impact by bringing together investments in health, food systems, and humanitarian assistance. USAID programming has contributed to advancing the global nutrition goals in 28 countries<sup>16</sup> through sustained financial and technical support for multi-sectoral nutrition programming that contributes to results achieved under both Feed the Future and [Acting on the Call](#) for the prevention of child and maternal deaths. In 2018, USAID published the [first periodic assessment](#) to monitor nutrition outcomes and reach across USAID's nutrition priority countries, and to track progress of and improve the implementation of USAID's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy, as outlined

in the [Strategy Monitoring & Learning Plan](#). Two additional periodical assessments will take place in 2022 and 2025.

To accelerate progress on reducing anemia, USAID and NIH launched an [Anemia Task Force](#) in collaboration with CDC and researchers from several universities in the U.S. and overseas, applying an ecological approach to understand and address more comprehensively the multiple causes of anemia. As part of the effort to improve global anemia prevalence data, USAID launched the Hemoglobin Measurement (HEME) Working Group with CDC collaboration to conduct research to improve the reliability and validity of hemoglobin measurements in population surveys. These two institutions have also continued their longstanding partnership through the International Micronutrient Malnutrition Prevention and Control ([IMMPaCT](#)) program to improve nutritional surveillance and interventions to combat micronutrient deficiencies. Over the course of the first Global Nutrition Coordination Plan, these efforts have included support for surveillance systems in Guatemala and Uganda, and the conduct of micronutrient surveys in Burkina Faso, Nepal, Malawi, Rwanda, and Tanzania. IMMPaCT also collaborates with other global partners, such as UNICEF, WHO, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In another initiative, the CDC lent expertise to the development of an updated electronic micronutrient survey manual and toolkit released in 2020 that facilitates the collection of data to understand the magnitude of micronutrient deficiencies at global and national levels and to improve programming. The [CDC's Emergency Response And Recovery Branch](#) in the Division Of Global Health Protection at the Center For Global Health supports those affected by emergencies and strengthens public health systems during and

after humanitarian crises like war, famine, civil strife, natural disaster, genocide, or displacement. Their work includes a focus on supporting infant and young child feeding, and preventing and reducing child wasting.

CDC, USAID, and NIH helped found and are members of Biomarkers Reflecting Inflammation and Nutritional Determinants of Anemia ([BRINDA](#)), which is a multi-agency and multi-country collaboration working group formed to improve micronutrient assessment and anemia characterization. Now in its fourth phase, BRINDA authors have published 34 papers that have been cited 1,188 times.

An alliance including USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, NIH, CDC, FDA, and USAID as well as teams of investigators from outside the government led a comprehensive research endeavor to develop evidence-based guidance for the United States on optimal nutrition for women during pregnancy and for children from birth to 24 months ([P/B-24 Project](#)). This evidence review, together with other inputs and analyses, informed the development of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans for those life stages, which also have great relevance to global nutrition.

NIH is also spearheading a project known as Breastmilk Ecology: Genesis of Infant Nutrition ([BEGIN](#)) to deepen understanding of the environmental, nutritional, biological, social, behavioral, and psychological influences on human milk production, composition, infant feeding, and maternal health. This research will inform nutritional guidance, reference standards, and recommendations for the United States and globally to promote the safest and most effective feeding practices. NIH and USDA's Agricultural Research Service have begun working together to deepen the understanding

of the intersections between climate change, agricultural production, and nutrition. Together with the American Society for Nutrition and the Keystone Policy Center, they have launched a public-private partnership titled Protein in a Changing Environment ([PRICE](#)) to explore how decisions on diet and health and consumer and producer choices influence environmental impacts or remediation, domestically and globally.

As part of its mission to leverage private sector investments to finance solutions to the most critical challenges facing the developing world today, DFC has committed significant direct U.S. government financing and other investment support for public health and nutrition, women's empowerment, and combatting the climate crisis. These include the \$2 billion Health and Prosperity Initiative expected to catalyze up to \$5 billion in projects to bolster health systems and expand access to nutrition and clean water and sanitation; the 2X Women's Initiative, which aims to catalyze almost \$20 billion of investment by 2025 in projects owned, led by, or empowering women; and most recently the Build Back Better World ([B3W](#)) initiative launched with the G7 partners and including USAID, MCC, as well as EXIM, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, and the Transaction Advisor Fund to mobilize investments in climate change mitigation and adaptation, global health and nutrition, gender equity and equality, and information and communications technology.

USDA/FAS manages the [McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program](#), which provided more than \$970 million in funding during the five years of this first Global Nutrition Coordination Plan to improve the nutritional content of school meal programs, boost school enrollment and

learning, and offer nutrition interventions for pregnant and lactating women, infants, and pre-school children. The program offers U.S. agricultural commodities, together with financial and technical assistance, to strengthen integrated school health and nutrition programs around the world (Figure 1).

USAID's food assistance programs also provide U.S. agricultural commodities combined with technical support to reduce hunger and malnutrition through emergency and development programs in more than 50 countries each year. These programs include support for the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition in women and children, and activities to bolster agricultural production, food security and livelihoods, and expand access to functioning water and sanitation systems – all systems promoting nutrition. USAID's food assistance activities are supported in close collaboration with development efforts to improve nutrition outcomes through food security and resilience and global health programs.

In 2021, discussions between USDA and NIH led to a joint effort to identify indicators to measure nutritional benefits of school feeding programs. This initiative has grown into the Biomarkers of Nutrition For Development: Knowledge Indicating Dietary Sufficiency (BOND-KIDS) global consortium comprising of FAS, ARS, NIH, CDC, USAID, UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

USDA also has a long history of supporting research to advance agricultural productivity to enhance nutrition. The priorities for the Department's most recent [Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2022-2026](#) include expanding climate smart agriculture and knowledge and practices around food safety, nutrition and health

promotion, including deepening the understanding of the role of microbiomes in protecting soil, plant, animal, human, and ecological health. USDA's nutrition [portfolio](#) is also identifying evidence-based practices for improving the school nutrition environment, combating childhood obesity, and increasing access to affordable and nutritious foods in disadvantaged communities. Although the research is often conducted in the United States, the findings benefit the global community.

The U.S. government, including contributions from HHS, NIH, USDA, USAID, and the State Department, continues to marshal immense financial and scientific resources to improve the fundamental understanding of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, advance treatment, detection, and prevention, and prevent poor outcomes. This work also entails efforts to control and mitigate the pandemic and its consequences and provide guidance and support to critical nutrition interventions, protect infant feeding, and strengthen food systems in low- and middle-income countries. All of these efforts mitigate both the health and nutritional impacts of the pandemic.

The State Department participates in diplomatic discussions to advance bold actions through all of the global forums cited earlier, as well as with the African Union, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the United Nations General Assembly. The Department of the Treasury [serves](#) on governing bodies of multilateral development banks to oversee U.S. contributions, advise on development finance policy priorities, and negotiate commitments. In addition, Treasury encourages the multilateral development banks to adopt measures to promote transparency and financial sustainability and enable more public health investments. Treasury also leads U.S. engagement with the

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), where it serves on the Governing Council, Executive Board, and Audit Committee and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), where it serves as the U.S. representative to the Steering Committee and Donor Committee.

#### **Action 4: Develop process for reporting annually on U.S. government investments in global nutrition (achieved)**

Since the SUN Donor Network members, including the U.S. government, agreed upon a common methodology to track financial contributions to achieve global nutrition targets in 2014, this group, led by USAID, has been working to enhance and carefully document the process for calculating and reporting whole-of-government resources for global nutrition. The U.S. has contributed annual data to global accountability platforms, such as the *Global Nutrition Report*, along with detailed documentation of how the donor methodology has been applied, to ensure transparency. As a result, the U.S. was able to demonstrate that the financial commitments made at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2013 were honored.<sup>17</sup>

This reporting has proven to be challenging, requiring adjustments to capture the number of relevant U.S. departments and agencies that contribute to global nutrition programming, and given the volume of U.S.-supported nutrition activities worldwide. In 2019, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) introduced a new nutrition policy marker to track donor investments in global nutrition. The policy marker is designed to identify all investments with a principle or significant objective that addresses immediate or underlying determinants of malnutrition.<sup>18</sup>

However, the methodology for calculating multi-sectoral nutrition investments across donors accurately and consistently using the new policy marker requires further analysis and coordination. In 2020, the U.S. government commissioned a multi-year analysis in collaboration with the SUN Donor Network members to strengthen the methodology. As part of the next five-year Coordination Plan, the U.S. government is committed to improving its systems and interagency coordination to track and report relevant investments comprehensively.

An analysis of nutrition-specific priority interventions indicates that the United States and United Kingdom have been the highest contributors, with U.S. funding increasing nine percent between 2015 and 2019.<sup>19</sup> Data also show increases from other important donors over this timeframe, but not enough to meet the goals of the Investment Framework for Nutrition. Moreover, funding needs are increasing in the face of COVID-19 and climate disruptions.

#### **Action 5: Link and collaborate with Interagency Committee on Human Nutrition Research (adjusted)**

In light of the complexity of the research portfolio of the Interagency Committee on Human Nutrition Research (ICNHR), and its multiple priorities and mandates, the members of the Implementation Science Sub-Working Group agreed to focus their efforts on highlighting the importance of harnessing implementation science to strengthen the delivery of nutrition interventions among Plan participants. It has been suggested that two-thirds of child deaths could be prevented by more effective use and administration of interventions already available,<sup>20</sup> and that greater priority should be given to research identifying the factors contributing to program effectiveness.<sup>21</sup> To this end, the Im-



Photo by USAID Nico Parkinson

plementation Science Sub-Working Group conducted a series of exchanges with the non-governmental Society for Implementation Science in Nutrition and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill-RTI International Consortium for Implementation Science. A [webinar](#) brought together researchers and practitioners applying robust monitoring systems to strengthen the delivery and sustainability of nutrition interventions.

The U.S. government continues to implement a tremendous breadth of activities relevant to global nutrition and to comprise a vast array of technical expertise in human nutrition. The next five-year Plan's vision and program priorities will bring renewed opportunities for synergies between nutrition research initiatives and global nutrition programming to support country- and region-led efforts, and generate and apply evidence.

### **Action 6: Make U.S. government nutrition data openly available (achieved)**

This goal was given a boost by the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, passed by the U.S. Congress in 2019, which mandates that all U.S. government agencies make data

publicly available in machine-readable format. Each participating agency has established a website to share data. These can be accessed as follows: [MCC](#), [HHS](#), [Peace Corps](#), [USAID](#) (Feed the Future datasets can also be accessed [here](#)), [USDA](#), [State](#) and [Treasury](#).

### **Action 7: Establish points of contact within all participating U.S. government agencies and select overseas posts (partially achieved)**

Each participating department/agency has identified a principal point of contact for the Global Nutrition Coordination Plan, as well as replacements over time, as needed.

Staff serving overseas have participated in selected webinars and in meetings of the Technical Working Group (TWG), but given the limited numbers of U.S. government staff posted overseas who have relevant responsibilities focused on nutrition, further complicated by the many time zone differences, the second part of this action did not prove feasible. Looking ahead to the next five-year Coordination Plan, the TWG is revisiting ways to improve engagement with overseas posts on U.S.-supported country-level and regional nutrition programming and policy.

## CONCLUSIONS AND LOOKING FORWARD

**T**he U.S. government has long been a leader in global nutrition, developing innovative approaches—most recently with a focus on multi-sectoral strategies—providing significant funding and advocacy in collaboration with global partners, and contributing to a new, more effective global architecture for nutrition built around a consensus on evidence-based solutions, priorities, and global cooperation. This leadership continued throughout the five years of the first U.S. government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan.

The TWG and its thematic Sub-Working Groups provided an array of opportunities for exchanges across the many participating government offices that otherwise would likely have worked in parallel. Relationships were strengthened and new ones formed that spawned new collaborations beyond those envisioned, all advancing both global and domestic nutrition programs. The many accomplishments are especially noteworthy in light of the fact that the Plan operates without a legislative directive or dedicated funding. The outcomes may not always be quantifiable, but they are evident to participants and observers.

The second Global Nutrition Coordination Plan (2021-2026) was launched in November 2021, ahead of the Nutrition for Growth Summit in December 2021, and constituted one of the U.S. government's commitments at the Summit. In a clear demonstration of the U.S. government's ongoing dedication to accelerating progress towards shared nutrition goals, the second plan was endorsed by the Secretaries of State, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, USAID Administrator, and Chief Executive Officers of MCC, DFC and Peace Corps. Guided by a stock-taking analysis of the inaugural five-year Global Nutrition Coordination Plan and an extensive interagency drafting process, the second Plan builds on the

strengths of the first, and adds mechanisms to engage higher level decision-makers, including a new group of Senior Nutrition Champions, in these exchanges to elevate challenges and solutions in global nutrition. The updated structure under the second Plan will enhance opportunities for communication and collaboration, and reorganize sub-working groups to respond to emerging and growing threats. Importantly, a revised set of expected results will frame an approach for tracking the outcomes of this interagency platform. [Reference Annex 2 framework]

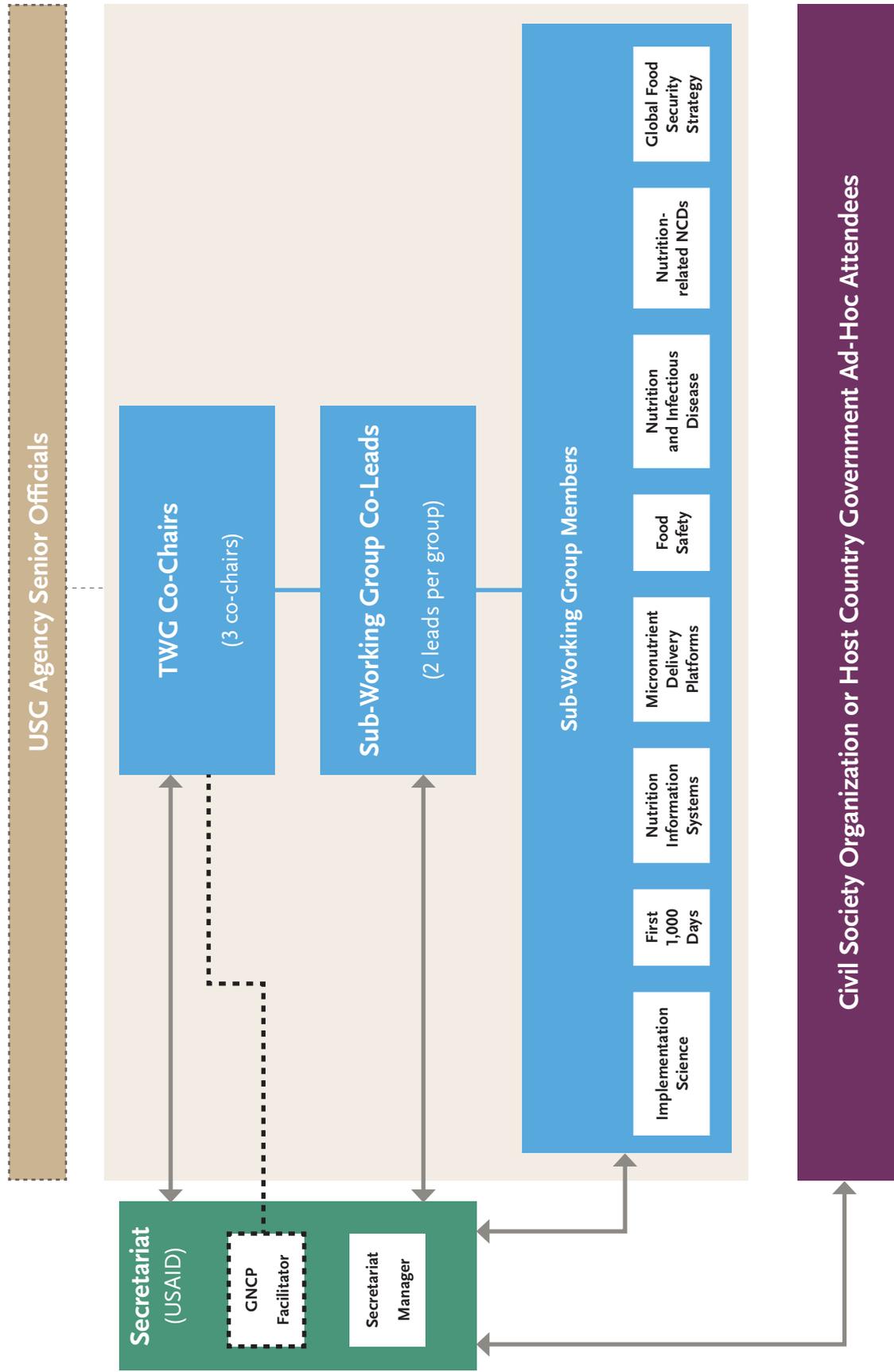


Photo by Fintrac Inc for USAID

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**A**s we reflect on the progress made during the five-year inaugural U.S. government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan, the Secretariat and Co-Chairs would like to recognize the contributions and dedication of the original interagency Nutrition Technical Working Group, consultants, Steering Committee of interagency senior officials, and previous Secretariat representatives, co-chairs, and sub-working group co-leads that drafted the first Plan and established the vision, structure, and operations for this unprecedented coordinating mechanism. We are grateful to Jennifer Nielsen, Kelly McDonald, and Yaritza Rodriguez from USAID Advancing Nutrition for their support in compiling and drafting this five-year summary. Finally, we extend our appreciation to the many stakeholders, including representatives of civil society organizations and other groups and individuals from both the U.S. and abroad, who participated in public consultations to support and help shape the Global Nutrition Coordination Plan since its inception.

# ANNEX 1: TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP



## Secretariat

**Facilitator:** Kellie Stewart, USAID; Anne Peniston, USAID

**Managers:** Tina Lloren and Kelly McDonald, USAID Advancing Nutrition; Kate Consavage, USAID

## TWG co-chairs

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Eric Anderson, USAID

Carolyn Wetzel Chen, MCC

Diane DeBernardo, USDA

Elaine Gray, USAID

Yibo Wood, USDA

## Sub-working group co-leads

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Sheila Fleischhacker, USDA

Ahmed Kablan, USAID

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### Food Safety

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### The First 1,000 Days

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Dan Raiten, NIH

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Mija-tesse Ververs, CDC

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### Micronutrient Delivery Platforms

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### Global Food Security Strategy

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# ANNEX 2: GLOBAL NUTRITION COORDINATION PLAN 2.0 FRAMEWORK AND OPERATING STRUCTURE

**VISION**

Save millions of lives and promote broad-based economic development by ending malnutrition in all its forms, optimizing U.S. government technical and financial resources, and convening capacity, to elevate nutrition as essential to enhancing health and well-being.

**PURPOSE**

To maximize the impact of investments across the continuum of nutrition-related policies, programs, and other efforts to accelerate achievement of global nutrition goals and increase whole-of-government responsiveness to emerging evidence, opportunities, and threats.

<b>Action Area 1</b> Promote leadership and partnership	<b>Action Area 2</b> Support country- and region-led efforts	<b>Action Area 3</b> Generate, share, and apply knowledge and evidence
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- GLOBAL NUTRITION PROGRAM PRIORITIES**
1. Women’s nutrition before and during pregnancy and lactation
  2. Breastfeeding and complementary feeding (0–24 months)
  3. Prevention and management of wasting in children under five years of age
  4. Micronutrient sufficiency
  5. Issues of special emphasis (e.g., COVID-19 and other health emergencies, nutrition during middle-childhood and adolescence; overweight/obesity, diet-related noncommunicable diseases (D-NCDs), environmental health, and climate)
- 
- Cross-cutting priority:** Nutrition-relevant policies and opportunities for high-level engagement

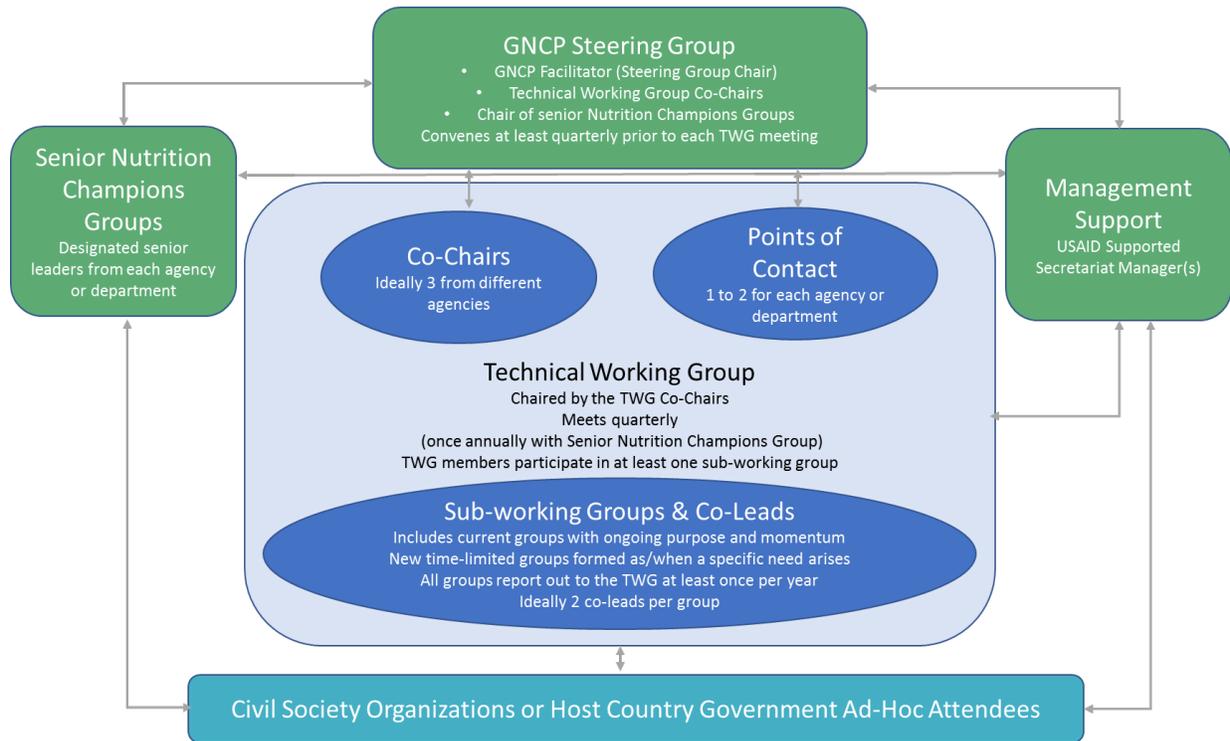
Systems Affecting Human Nutrition:					
Food	Health	Water and Sanitation	Education	Environment	Social Protection

Guiding Principles:  
Equity—Diversity and Inclusion—Locally-led—Gender Integration—Evidence-based—  
Multi-sectoral—Accountability

U.S. government Assets to Strengthen Coordination

U.S. government Agencies and Departments Supporting the Vision

## Operating Structure of the Global Nutrition Coordination Plan 2021–2026



## ANNEX 3: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TOWARDS THE SEVEN PRIORITY ACTIONS

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 May 2022
<b>Action #1:</b> 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.	<b>Completed.</b> The Technical Working Group functions as the operational body of the Coordination Plan.
<b>Action #2:</b> Release an annual summary of inter-agency progress under the U.S. government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan.	<b>Completed.</b> This report includes a summary of the fifth year of implementation.
<b>Action #3:</b> 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.	This report serves as a summary of the U.S. government's contributions at the end of this 5-year period.
<b>Action #4</b> Develop a process to gather and report interagency information on annual U.S. government nutrition resource expenditures.	<b>Completed and ongoing.</b> 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.
<b>Action #5</b> Form a U.S. government Global Nutrition Implementation Science Sub-Working Group that can interact with the existing Inter-agency Committee on Human Nutrition Research (ICHNR) and share best practices to link research to nutrition programs	<b>Partially completed.</b> 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.
<b>Action #6</b> Make U.S. government nutrition data openly available in accordance with the U.S. government open data initiative	<b>Completed and ongoing.</b> All agencies and departments have open data initiatives and publish nutrition data.
<b>Action #7:</b> 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	<b>Partially completed.</b> The TWG has points of contact within each participating agency and department, but not international U.S. posts.

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- 10 2020 Feed the Future Progress Snapshot, available <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/cultivating-hope/>
- 11 These countries are Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda. More details on the initiative can be found at <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/>
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- 13 Teague, J. (2017). *The U.S. Contribution to Ending Global Malnutrition*. Washington DC: Bread for the World Institute. Available <https://www.bread.org/library/us-contribution-ending-global-malnutrition>
- 14 See <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/about>



Photo by Antene Tadele GOAL

- 15 The toolkit for this approach can be found at <https://coregroup.org/resource-library/essential-nutrition-actions-and-essential-hygiene-actions-framework/>
- 16 For the number of USAID-supported countries, see <https://www.usaid.gov/open/nutrition-report/fy-2021>
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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](https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/global-health/nutrition/usgplan)