



Nutrition Capacity
Assessment,
a compass for strengthening
multi-sectoral actions to
ameliorate Chad's dire
nutrition situation



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The nutrition statistics for Chad are daunting. According to the 2018 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report, child stunting in Chad (39.9 percent) is climbing, well exceeding the new 'very high' population threshold (30 percent) being used by WHO and UNICEF. In some pockets of the country, the prevalence of stunting exceeds 50 percent. The exclusive breastfeeding rate, one of the most effective nutrition actions, has fallen to a dismal 0.1 percent. While overweight and obesity levels are low, a slight increase was reported in the prevalence of adult obesity, further complicating the situation. How is this possible given the attention the Government of Chad has devoted to nutrition in recent years and the myriad of external assistance it has received?

The country's high exposure to climate extremes as well as conflict are contributing to the high levels of malnutrition (SOFI 2018). These shocks undermine ongoing efforts to improve food security, care practices, access to health services and safe water as well as the sanitation environment. A nutrition capacity assessment, supported by the UNN's intensive service, REACH, sheds additional light. In many ways, the capacity assessment exercise reflects the crescendo of efforts to address the country's situation to improve nutrition governance and animate a multi-sectoral approach that addresses the causes of malnutrition at all levels.

The assessment unfolded over a three-month period, enabling the consultants to speak with several participants. The UNN-REACH Facilitator played an integral role, advocating for the study, which was covered by UNN-REACH funding. The idea was initially pitched to UNN focal points and the SUN Government Focal Point, who were actively engaged throughout the process, to ensure engagement across sectors. In addition, the UNN Secretariat supported the Facilitator by imparting learning from similar assessments in other countries (e.g. Burkina Faso, Lesotho and Senegal).

Taking the form of a qualitative study, information was gathered through a desk review, key informant interviews and focus groups with representatives from government and the respective SUN networks, including the UN Network. The assessment team measured capacities in four strategic areas: 1) the integration of nutrition into four main sectors; 2) enabling environment; 3) capacity building; and 4) advocacy, communications, data and networking. It also took into account the eleven pillars of the National Food and Nutrition Policy, 2014 - 2025 (*Politique Nationale de Nutrition et d'Alimentation* or PNNA), understanding that they constitute the functions of the Permanent Technical Committee on Food and Nutrition (*Comité Technique Permanent de la Nutrition et de l'Alimentation* or CTPNA), and thus should be part and parcel of the assessment.

TABLE 1. Adapted from capacity assessment report

STRATEGIC THEME	11 STRATEGIC AXES OF THE NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY
Mainstreaming nutrition into ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The health system • Food security • Community nutrition programmes and water and sanitation • The education system
Enabling environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National surveillance system for food and nutrition security • Elaboration and implementation of standards and legislation on food and nutrition • Strengthened partnerships with civil society, the private sector and relevant local movements
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institution strengthening
Advocacy, communications, data & networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging and communications on food and nutrition • Promotion of and support for applied research in nutrition

The study focused on the functional capacities of the CTPNA, led by the SUN Focal Point and supported by eight SUN networks.¹ In addition, it also encompassed newly established food and nutrition committees in five regions – Guéra; Logone Occidental; Ouaddaï; Tandjilé; and Wadi Fari – looking at their respective capacity to plan, manage and coordinate nutrition actions. Not only did the assessment identify a series of capacity development needs, it also documented strengths and achievements.

TABLE 2. *Excerpt from capacity assessment report*

THEMATIC AREA 3: CAPACITY BUILDING
Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Actors have a clear vision of an effective capacity building approach to support the achievement of nutrition objectives ✓ Implementation of inter-network capacity building initiatives (e.g. between Parliamentarian and Journalist Networks) allowing parties to better leverage their areas of expertise
Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Permanent Technical Food and Nutrition Committee (CTPNA) lacks a strategic plan for capacity building ✓ Obsolete nutrition training curricula for diploma courses ✓ Absence of training modules to strengthen nutrition-related knowledge and skills for all stakeholders

¹ These SUN networks include: 1) the UN Network; 2) the Civil Society Network; 3) the Donor Network; 4) the Business Network; 5) the Parliamentarian Network; 6) the Scientific Network; 7) the Journalists Network; and 8) the Champion's Network.

This enabled country actors to build upon these strengths when tackling the current challenges. In this light, the report positioned the members of the CTPNA both as change agents and recipients of capacity development activities, outlined in the 5-year nutrition capacity development plan.



Among the key findings, the assessment revealed that sectoral participation in monthly CTPNA meetings is variable as is the functionality of the regional coordination committees and the extent to which nutrition is institutionalized within related sectors. It recommended efforts to mainstream nutrition within the line ministries, including sectoral policies. It also found that many communication activities regarding multi-sectorality have been carried out by various actors, such as the CTPNA steering committee and the SUN networks (Parliamentarian, Civil Society and UN). With that said, it recommended improving CTPNA's internal and external communications in order to leverage its members' ability to further institutionalize nutrition within the health, education, agriculture and WASH sectors.

In general, the study found that the country has taken great strides to create a solid foundation in terms of nutrition governance frameworks, coordination architecture and political commitment to combat malnutrition. Further efforts – including capacity development activities to formalize the *modus operandi* of CTPNA as well as the articulation of a strategic vision for the regional food and nutrition committees (*Comités régionaux de la nutrition et d'alimentation*, CRNAs) – are needed to translate this into concrete action. With these insights, the nutrition coordination platforms will be better equipped to operationalize the PNNA and the corresponding Inter-Sectoral Food and Nutrition Plan (PAINA) at all levels. Country actors found the exercise to be useful in that it provided context-specific diagnostics and avenues for action-based solutions. A Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping was launched in December 2018, thanks to UNN-REACH support and generous EU funding, to ascertain the coverage levels of core nutrition actions. The mapping is building Government capacity to better coordinate nutrition action across diverse stakeholders and sectors in pursuit of common nutrition goals. Read [Chad's Nutrition Capacity Assessment Report](#) to learn more.²

2 Visit: <https://www.unnetworkforsun.org/sites/default/files/documents/files/Nutrition%20Capacity%20Assessment%20Chad-Final%20%286Jun2018%29.pdf>.