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STRATEGIC EVALUATION

Joint Evaluation of Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and under-nutrition (REACH) 2011-2015

Volume I – Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Context

1.   This document summarizes the evaluation of the United Nations Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH) initiative, which supports participating countries in strengthening the governance and management of nutrition programmes. Partners include WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the International Fund for Agricultural Development has an advisory role.

2.   REACH was initiated in 2008 as part of a global nutrition agenda that had evolved significantly since the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition. In 1977, the United Nations established a Standing Committee on Nutrition to harmonize nutrition policies and standards across United Nations agencies[1]. By 2008, growing scientific consensus on the causes and consequences of various forms of malnutrition,[2] mounting evidence of the impacts of malnutrition on national economies,[3] and the global food price crisis had catalyzed action. There was also recognition of the "deeply fragmented and dysfunctional nature of the global aid architecture for nutrition",[2] and the need for more momentum, and better leadership and coordination.

3.   .Against this backdrop, REACH began in Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mauritania in 2008, followed by Sierra Leone in 2010. Also in 2010, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement began, which aimed at galvanizing countries' commitment to stronger nutrition response. Between 2008 and 2015, REACH gradually covered 20 countries (Table 1).

4.   The evaluation assessed the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of REACH activities and results in Bangladesh, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.[4] It also assessed the REACH secretariat's role, processes, coordination arrangements, governance and partnerships. Conducted between January and June 2015, it covered activities implemented from 2011 to 2015.

5.   This evaluation faced three limitations: i) it was conducted during a period of major deliberations on the future of the United Nations Network for SUN, culminating in the decision that the REACH secretariat should coordinate the SUN network;[5] ii) its scope included only one of the three pilot countries – Sierra Leone – and excluded four of the first-generation REACH countries – Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia and the Niger; and iii) a full counterfactual comparison was not feasible because of the nature of REACH. Appropriately, the evaluation team adopted a theory-based approach, drawing on the REACH theory of change (Figure 1) with contribution analysis based on the eight

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1 http://www.unscn.org/en/mandate/ The steering committee was created as the Administrative Committee on Coordination of the United Nations Subcommittee on Nutrition; its structure and focus evolved over time.
2 The Lancet. 2008. Series on Maternal and Child Undernutrition: Executive Summary.
3 Hoddinott et al. 2008. Effect of a nutritional intervention during early childhood on economic productivity in Guatemalan adults. The Lancet 391(9610): 411–416; Horton et al. 2010. Scaling Up Nutrition: What will it cost? Washington, DC, World Bank.
4 REACH activities in these countries are funded by Canada.
5 This decision was made in November 2014 and confirmed by a Memorandum of Understanding in March 2015 (REACH. 2015. Revalidation Agreement of the Memorandum of Understanding Among FAO, WHO, UNICEF and WFP Concerning the Hosting Arrangement of the REACH Partnership.).

country studies.[6] Gender and equity concerns were integrated throughout the evaluation. The evaluation team drew on internal and external documentation, secondary data, REACH baseline and end-line data, 69 global-level and more than 300 country-level interviews, and a desk study of Sierra Leone. In addition, the team attended the annual REACH facilitators' workshop in March 2015.

Table 1: Reach Countries

Countries	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Pilot								
Lao People's Democratic Republic	▓	▓	▓					
Mauritania	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓		
Sierra Leone			▓	▓	▓	▓		
First generation								
Bangladesh			▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Ghana				▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Mali				▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Mozambique				▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Nepal				▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Rwanda				▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
United Republic of Tanzania				▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Uganda				▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Ethiopia				▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Niger					▓	▓	▓	▓
Burundi						▓	▓	▓
Chad						▓	▓	▓
Second generation								
Burkina Faso							▓	▓
Haiti							▓	▓
Senegal							▓	▓
Myanmar								▓
Guinea								▓

Source: REACH September 2015.

The REACH Initiative

6.   REACH is based on a theory of change (summarized in Figure 1), which envisages that the nutrition of children under 5 and women[7] can be enhanced if country-level nutrition governance is improved, including political commitment to its importance. The initiative rests on two major assumptions:

i)   A multi-sectoral approach is the most effective way to address undernutrition.

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6 Contribution analysis is a type of evaluation that assesses the contributions that an intervention makes to the observed results.
7 The complete REACH theory of change is presented in Annex E of the evaluation report.

ii) Inter-agency collaboration is the most efficient mechanism for delivering the ultimate impact of reduced undernutrition.

7.   The theory of change also assumes that improved nutrition governance requires progress towards increased awareness and stakeholder consensus, strengthened national policies and programmes, increased human and institutional capacity, and increased effectiveness and accountability.

Figure 1: REACH theory of change

If we address these issues …	with these strategies …	then we can achieve …	this impact
Little consensus on the causes of undernutrition Little transparency about multitude of activities Limited political commitment Weak coordination of governments with UN agencies and other stakeholders Nutrition is not seen as a multi-sector issue Poor capacity development Accountability and responsibility are undervalued	**REACH outcomes** 1 Increase awareness and consensus of stakeholders 2 Strengthened national policies and programmes 3 Increased human and institutional capacity 4 Increased effectiveness and accountability	**Governance impact** Better management and governance of a multi-sector approach to nutrition Political support to fund programmes	**Nutritional impact and coverage** **Improved nutrition for women and children**

Source: REACH.

8.   Figure 2 illustrates the global and country-level structures and institutional architecture for REACH. The initiative operates through a secretariat based in Rome with eight full-time staff and consultants, and 18 international and national country-based facilitators.[8] The secretariat provides technical facilitation to REACH countries and liaises with partners globally. REACH country-level facilitators support multi-sector, multi-stakeholder processes for implementing change and achieving the four REACH outcomes listed in Figure 1.

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[8] As of March 2015.

Figure 2: REACH global and country-level structures
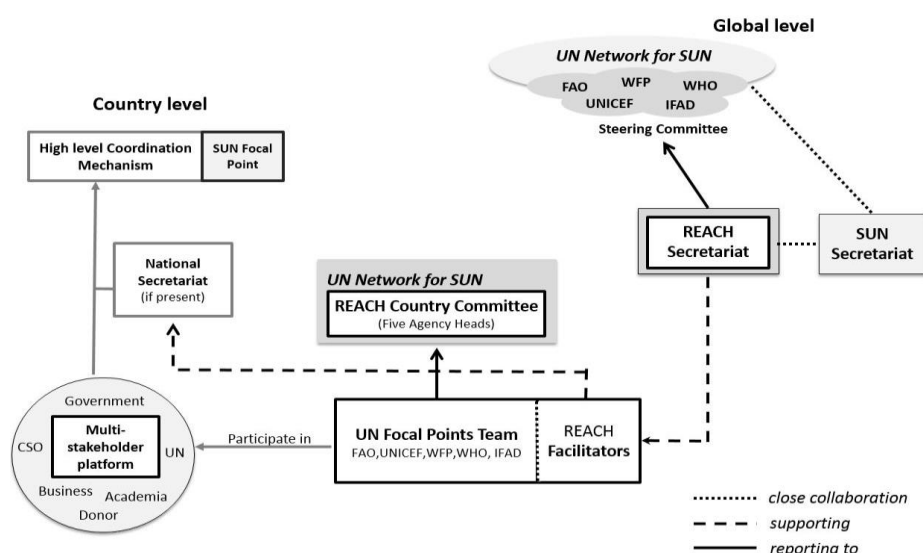
Source: REACH.

9.   The REACH secretariat and facilitators work with specified tools and guidance materials to support analytical work in the four outcome areas. Structures vary by country, with facilitators being based within either a United Nations agency or a government institution responsible for nutrition. Country-level efforts are guided by country implementation plans (CIPs) and annual work plans. Decisions about REACH country activities are made by REACH coordinating committees made up of the country-level heads of the four partner United Nations agencies. Day-to-day implementation is supported by United Nations nutrition focal points. Each country was allocated USD 1,475,000 for REACH activities for a three-year period. Table 2 indicates the main funding sources.

Table 2: REACH Funding Sources

Funding source	Amount (*USD*)	Funding period	Target countries
Canada*	11 800 000	2011–2016	Bangladesh, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania
Canada*	3 933 333	2014–2016	Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mali, Myanmar, Senegal
European Union	3 934 735	2012–2016	The Niger
WFP	1 350 000	2013–2015	REACH secretariat support, including the global coordinator position

*Canadian support was provided by Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development.
Source: REACH

10.   REACH's responsibility for supporting SUN processes at the country level was not explicitly stated until the March 2015 Memorandum of Understanding.

Findings

Relevance and Appropriateness of REACH's Design

11. *Alignment with the international nutrition agenda and priorities of participating countries.* The design of REACH fits well with the priorities of the international nutrition agenda, especially given its focus on prioritizing country-specific and country-led responses, multi-sector action and the need to scale up funding. CIP processes were useful in setting country-level priorities for all stakeholders and responding to nationally recognized needs and gaps. However, they were not always sufficiently thorough or participatory to be completely owned by the countries, and gaps between CIP design and implementation reduced their relevance.

12. *Coherence with the mandates and capacities of the four United Nations agencies.* REACH's objectives were in line with the nutrition priorities of the four participating agencies, including their gender and equity objectives. However, REACH did not always make sufficient use of existing United Nations tools – guidance and manuals – or effectively leverage the agencies' nutrition capacity to improve coordination and scale up national nutrition responses. At the country level, competition for funding among the four agencies and with REACH affected the initiative's level of coherence.

13. *Coherence, alignment and complementarity between REACH and other global/national nutrition initiatives.* In a crowded nutrition environment, which includes the related SUN movement and the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition, the establishment of REACH as another initiative was contested and continues to be questioned by some global stakeholders. There is little understanding of REACH beyond the people directly involved. The evaluation found various contributory factors for this, including lack of operational buy-in, REACH's low-profile facilitating role and focus on the country level, and its limited range of global-level partnerships. At the country level, the evaluation found that REACH complemented and facilitated SUN activities and was considered by all stakeholders to be well aligned and coherent with the nutrition work of governments, donors and civil society.

14. *Alignment with and contribution to equity, including gender equality.* REACH was designed to align with and contribute to equity, including gender equality. However, CIPs were uneven in clarifying the extent to which these issues would be addressed through improved planning, advocacy and monitoring.

15. *Validity of REACH's theory of change.* The validity of the REACH theory of change is challenged by major assumptions from the outcome to the impact levels.[9] The evaluation found relatively strong evidence that multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approaches have brought about increased awareness of nutrition issues and improved priority setting in the eight countries evaluated, and that REACH played a role in this. However, the evaluation found only limited evidence that stakeholders' commitment was a direct result of this increased awareness of and consensus on nutrition problems. In particular, collaboration among United Nations agencies at the levels required for bringing about the envisioned changes was consistently weak, in part because of an absence of incentives for collaboration. The evaluation also found

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[9] These outcome-to-impact assumptions include: i) REACH can enhance governance – decision-making and power relations – in addition to structure; ii) its outcomes will be accompanied by political will and resources to deliver at scale; iii) its interventions, policies, plans and programmes are technically sound and appropriate to country contexts; and iv) stakeholders' commitment to supporting nutrition actions is a direct result of increased awareness of and consensus on nutrition problems and how to address them.

only limited evidence to support the assumption that REACH can influence power relations through country facilitators and United Nations focal points so that national governments and other important stakeholders – including United Nations agencies – put nutrition at the top of their agendas.

Country-Level Performance

16.   The evaluation assessed performance against targets set in CIPs and annual plans, drawing on REACH monitoring data and the evaluation case studies. REACH activities are designed to produce multi-sector outputs. Table 3 lists the most common outputs observed in CIPs.

Table 3: Selected REACH Outputs

Stakeholder and activity maps
Core Nutrition actions selection
Investment cases
Joint nutrition communication and advocacy strategies
Integration of nutrition into national and United Nations development strategies
National nutrition policies/action plans
Multi-sector nutrition coordination mechanisms
Institutional and human capacity for nutrition in government
Accountability matrix for food and nutrition security at the national and district levels
Nutrition monitoring system
Establishment of nutrition as a focus area for the United Nations Delivering as One

Effectiveness

17.   *Outcome 1 – Increased awareness of the problem and potential solutions.* REACH effectively contributed to increased awareness of nutrition problems and potential solutions, and helped to build national commitment. However, stakeholder and activity mapping – the most prominent activity – was considered over complex and difficult to update. Over the period reviewed, REACH made significant but in most cases incomplete progress on joint communications and advocacy strategies. Less progress was made on investment cases, and this planned output was removed from the priorities in view of other initiatives such as cost-of-hunger profiles. This implied missed opportunities to leverage resources for nutrition priorities as originally envisaged.

18.   *Outcome 2 – Strengthening national nutrition policies and programmes.* As countries' baselines differed, progress varied considerably. In most countries, REACH contributed to advancing national or subnational plans by drafting or contributing to processes that ensured their approval. In Ghana and Mozambique, engagement through REACH inspired a new intensity of nutrition planning at subnational levels. However, plans in all eight cases remained unimplemented because funding was lacking. In two countries, institutional limitations precluded progress towards this outcome.

19.   *Outcome 3 – Increased capacity at all levels.* The complexities of capacity development processes meant that there were limits to what REACH could achieve in three years. Along with other partners, the initiative contributed to significant enhancements in institutional capacity, although sustainability cannot be guaranteed. However, there was no clear agreement among global stakeholders regarding whether REACH should focus purely on mobilizing partners to provide technical inputs or play a direct role in addressing capacity gaps. REACH's role in supporting United Nations

coordination was contested by global and country-level informants – especially the extent to which donors should provide funds.

20.   *Outcome 4 – Increasing effectiveness and accountability.* This outcome saw limited progress: work was done to develop multi-sector monitoring systems and partial nationally led systems are now in place in some countries.

21.   REACH's achievements in breaking down barriers among United Nations agencies were also limited. Good technical relationships were built, but there was little joint programming other than that occurring through One United Nations. Country-level stakeholders had differing opinions as to whether REACH should or could have a coordinating function among United Nations agencies. Progress was strongly affected by the willingness of United Nations agencies to collaborate at the country level. Progress towards this outcome was uneven and depended on local institutional factors and the personalities of country heads of United Nations agencies. REACH's limited performance in this area highlights the flawed assumption in the theory of change that relatively short-term facilitators at the country level could influence long-standing institutional incentives and political economy factors.

Equity and gender

22.   REACH's tools and analytical work highlighted equity and gender issues. However, across all countries and stakeholder groups REACH was not strongly associated with having specifically advocated for equity and gender, or with having progressed on the agenda in this area.

Efficiency

23.   Across REACH countries, results were achieved with lower budgets than planned, allowing timelines to be extended appropriately beyond the overly ambitious ones factored into REACH's original design. There was some loss in programming efficiency because of delays in the placement of REACH facilitators in all countries. As a result, preliminary data were often out of date and in Bangladesh, Ghana, Mozambique, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, some of the people involved in formulating CIPs had moved on.

24.   REACH's flexibility at the country level allowed it to be agile and opportunistic, and in various countries cost savings were often realized when funds allocated by organizations outside the United Nations allowed REACH to extend the contracts of facilitators in all countries. The country case studies revealed significant underspending in all countries, partly because other donors or agencies funded activities that REACH had planned, as in Ghana, Mozambique, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

25.   While country-level respondents considered that the REACH model was not expensive, global-level respondents saw it as expensive. In neither case was there a specific cost analysis to address these perceptions.

Explanatory Factors Affecting Performance and Results

26.   Through its country-level facilitators, REACH has been the field-level implementer of the SUN movement's activities. REACH facilitators were consistently complimented for their hard work and excellent technical capacity. The quality and engagement of REACH staff, and REACH's flexibility and local decision-making structures, enabled progress in spite of challenges. REACH tools were highly regarded

by many stakeholders; however there were reservations about exacerbating the proliferation of tools alongside the tools of other agencies, and about the complexity of some REACH tools, which are difficult for local technical staff to update.

27. Major external factors influencing REACH performance in each country included the degree to which nutrition was already a priority in each country; and – at the level of REACH's internal governance – the support provided by the technical group[10] and the REACH coordinating committee.[11]

28. The support provided to countries by the REACH secretariat was considered to have improved over the evaluation period. However, informants indicated that further improvements could be made through better alignment with field- and Headquarters-level priorities, staffing to meet countries' needs and increasing links to regional United Nations offices. Also noted were the need for a more strategic and cross-sectoral REACH steering committee, stronger induction and support to facilitators during start-up, and clarity with regard to country-level processes.

29. REACH did not excel in forming diverse and strategic partnerships at either the country or the global level. Most global stakeholders knew little about REACH. This limited approach to partnership reduced REACH's overall influence.

Sustainability

30. The intended two- to three-year year catalytic phase of REACH was insufficient. While government ownership has increased to varying degrees and the capacity of nutrition coordination structures has been expanded in a few, including their staffing at the decentralized level, there is need to consolidate emerging gains.

31. REACH's transition plans – which focus on effective multi-sector, multi-stakeholder facilitation and support at the country level and which would allow the initiative to exit from countries – were developed late, sometimes requiring additional resources to continue the facilitator position beyond the envisaged three years. Across REACH countries, continuing progress in nutrition governance was considered likely to require full-time staff in the future rather than a reduced workforce or phase-out as envisaged by the REACH model. Despite government stakeholders' positive views of REACH's contribution, there was little commitment to assuming the costs of these positions, other than in Mozambique and possibly Rwanda.

32. Given the support that REACH has provided to SUN at the country level, strong concerns were expressed that SUN will likely be affected by the transitioning of REACH to new modalities, especially if facilitator positions are discontinued.

Conclusions

33. Across the eight countries, REACH made most progress towards its outcomes 1 and 2, and less or no progress on outcomes 3 and 4. This was partly related to the initiative's limited timeframes and the sequential nature of these outcomes.

34 Progress was significantly influenced by the performance of the secretariat in Rome. While the process of the initiative's launch was slow, and disjointed and confused in some respects, the secretariat has gradually introduced standardized programmes of work across REACH countries.

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[10] The technical group included nutrition focal points from United Nations agencies in REACH countries.
[11] Heads of the four United Nations partner agencies in REACH countries.

15.   The initiative fits well within the international nutrition agenda and with the priorities of its convening United Nations agencies, and is broadly relevant to country policies and priorities. However, there are limitations to applying a standard model that is not sufficiently attuned to local realities, under tight timeframes.

26.   REACH has provided relevant, timely and well-prioritized facilitation and support, enhancing nutrition responses in the countries where it has been present. The initiative has contributed to greater stakeholder engagement, progress in national commitment to nutrition, more effective setting of priorities and capacity development. REACH has also contributed to monitoring and accountability with varying degrees of success.

37.   The achievements and weaknesses of REACH reflect the quality of its design and implementation. Positive features include flexible procedures and implementation arrangements, field presence, quality tools and instruments, strong dialogue, neutrality, and a focus on processes as well as results. REACH has also supported SUN effectively in advancing on the nutrition agenda. However, there has been an element of overshadowing by the SUN movement, which has contributed to REACH being relatively less known and understood.

38.   The challenges that REACH has faced reflect its weak theory of change; the ambitious nature of its plans and timeframes; the sequential nature of its outcomes, which required more time for implementation; the varying levels of government ownership; and the lack of a partnership strategy, which caused low levels of buy-in and support from its partner agencies. The REACH theory of change did not take sufficient account of factors from outcome to impact level, such as the importance of high-level political commitment from governments, the political economy of the United Nations, and the lack of clear accountability and incentives for support within the United Nations. The latter was undermined by the absence of: i) sustained commitment from the highest level of the convening United Nations agencies; ii) a clear mandate for collaboration from the United Nations; and iii) strong and enforced accountability mechanisms.

39.   In practice, the commitments of governments and United Nations agencies were not always strong and clear enough to enable progress. Regarding internal governance, the variable – and in some cases low – commitment and buy-in of the technical group and the REACH coordinating committees were key factors affecting performance. In a crowded global landscape, the existence of REACH continues to be questioned by some nutrition actors.

40.   Overall, the results and achievements of REACH are unlikely to be sustainable unless additional investments and efforts are made. There has been insufficient attention to the effects on the SUN movement when REACH ends. In addition, country exit strategies were premature in relation to progress, and were developed late in the process.

Recommendations

41.The evaluation team formulated these recommendations at a time when various far-reaching decisions had recently been made, including on: i) REACH becoming the secretariat of the United Nations Network for SUN; and ii) in parallel, the roll-out of arrangements for funding REACH in additional countries. These decisions assume that there is a continued need for REACH and influence its future role, functioning, structure and scope.

42.   **Recommendation 1**: The core function of REACH should continue to be facilitation and coordination of country-level nutrition responses, with a strong focus on maintaining and developing its reputation for neutrality. This function should be based on two modes of intervention: one should involve multi-year facilitation services, building on the approach adopted to date; and the other should involve specialized short-term facilitation and related services for countries meeting specific criteria.

43.   Continued support at the country level to strengthen facilitation in the SUN countries[12] should recognize that it may be possible to continue multi-annual "REACH-like" engagements in selected countries – subject to full appraisals – but that in other countries the REACH contribution will have to be on a smaller scale, with specific criteria developed to ensure feasibility. REACH's perceived neutrality has allowed it to be effective as a broker among different organizations and entities. To maintain this neutrality, clear limits should be placed on the time, type of engagement and resources that REACH dedicates to supporting the United Nations Network for SUN.

44.   **Recommendation 2:** REACH should develop a medium-term vision, strategies and an operating plan for its second phase, which has a five-year timeframe to align effectively with SUN's five-year timeframe and strategy.

45.   This will require:

- extending the timeframe in existing REACH countries by two more years to consolidate gains and move towards sustainability (Bangladesh, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania); and

- adopting a five-year timeframe in new countries from the outset.

46.   **Recommendation 3:** As part of its key strategies for engagement, REACH should encourage the United Nations Network for SUN – which REACH now coordinates – to align its focus with REACH's core function of facilitation and coordination. The network – and REACH'S support to it – would thus have a central mission in mobilizing the technical strength of the United Nations for facilitating scaled-up and effective country-level nutrition responses.

47.   REACH's new and additional responsibility as Secretariat of the United Nations Network for SUN provides the possibility of greater alignment between SUN and REACH. There is opportunity and potential risk in the new arrangement. The opportunity lies in the fact that the valuable resources and leveraging power of the United Nations can be used effectively in the nutrition response. The risk is that of side-tracking what REACH has done well and of REACH losing its valuable neutrality. To address this risk, there is a need for clarity on what the United Nations Network for SUN can achieve and for this to align with the focus and mandate of REACH.

48.   **Recommendation 4:** The next phase of REACH – and further decisions on funding multi-year, country-level interventions – should be based on a thorough reappraisal of the REACH theory of change, which should recognize that the role of REACH is facilitation and related services, rather than technical assistance or support. The new theory of change should form both the role of REACH as the implementer of

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[12] SUN covers 55 countries (http://scalingupnutrition.org/sun-countries).

SUN in the field and its support to the United Nations Network for SUN. It should be broadly disseminated to contribute to better understanding of REACH's role in the overall nutrition environment.

49.   The design of any future REACH multi-year intervention should explicitly state and test the assumptions on which it is based and identify the conditions for receiving REACH support. The evaluation identified five conditions for implementation of REACH multi-year programming: i) a senior REACH facilitator should be in-country for a minimum of five years; ii) thorough consultative preparation by and commitment from all parties; iii) plans for supporting immediate start up; iv) financial commitments from United Nations partners to supporting the REACH approach; and v) early work on approaches to sustainability.

50.   **Recommendation 5:** To inform the new theory of change, REACH should commission a study of the architecture of technical assistance for scaling up nutrition. The study should include facilitation and identify priority areas for REACH, taking into account the work of other technical-support partners. The study should be used to inform REACH's medium-term plan of action and its strategies for engagement in the coming five years (see recommendations 1–4).

51.   **Recommendation 6:** Participating United Nations agencies should sign a new Memorandum of Understanding with stronger provisions that include strategic decision-making and accountability mechanisms at the most senior level of United Nations agencies; commitment to contributing funding to country-level REACH activities; and commitment to better coordinating their planning, resourcing, implementation and advocacy efforts in the nutrition sector at the country level.

52.   Future work to support country-level coordination of nutrition interventions through REACH should be contingent on serious and public commitment at all levels of United Nations agencies to better coordinate their planning, resourcing, implementation and advocacy efforts in this sector. To this end, high-level commitments from agencies need to be matched with commitments to collaboration at technical level, underscoring that this will entail a less agency-centred approach. In the absence of these commitments, there is the risk that REACH will lose focus, waste effort and ultimately fail.

53.   **Recommendation 7:** The REACH partnership should proactively explore and develop funding options and sources for its second phase. Recognizing its recently augmented role regarding the United Nations Network for SUN, it should particularly encourage appropriate financial allocations from member agencies (see recommendation 6), donors and host countries. Funding from host governments should be encouraged as a means of ensuring sustainability in countries where multi-year engagement is foreseen.

54.   **Recommendation 8:** Country-level implementation of REACH should continue to be guided by CIPs and annual plans. However, CIP processes should be revised to ensure maximum leadership and buy-in from all stakeholders. CIPs should also adopt an approach to ensuring that equity and gender issues are part of the country-level work and global advocacy on nutrition. Ensuring that REACH has expertise in gender and equity, establishing incentives for national actions on gender and equity in nutrition, and monitoring progress against indicators are all essential

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1. Introduction

1.1 Evaluation Features

Rationale, objectives and scope of the evaluation

1. This report concerns the evaluation of the United Nations (UN) Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH) Initiative. UN REACH supports countries in strengthening the governance and management of nutrition responses. It brings together four United Nations partners in achieving this goal. The participating UN partners are the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) – which joined later – has an advisory role in REACH. REACH's initial activities started in 2008 and were expanded in 2010. The evaluation covered the period between 2011 and 2015 and focused in particular on REACH's work in eight DFATD-funded countries.

2. REACH puts high priority on understanding how the initiative has fared in contributing to improving nutrition governance. The evaluation focused on those aspects that cannot be understood through routine monitoring and on contributing to accountability and lesson learning. In particular, for the REACH Secretariat and UN REACH agencies the evaluation presented an opportunity to learn about the differences in approaches and outcome achievements across countries and to use this to inform REACH partner agencies and governments on areas of future action.

3. The intended users of this evaluation are the REACH Secretariat, the REACH Steering Committee and the UN partner agencies, the donor and funder of the evaluation (DFATD), other potential donors of REACH, as well as the REACH partners in country.[1] This of course includes the Governments of REACH countries and member countries of the UN Agencies. It is expected that the evaluation report will be of interest to the broader nutrition community. The evaluation includes a gender focus in the evaluation scope and terms of reference (TOR). This is reflected in the evaluation approach, methods and instruments.

4. The evaluation sought to answer four key questions (see the terms of reference (TOR) in Annex A).

- How relevant and appropriate is the design of REACH?

- How has REACH performed at country level? (examining REACH's effectiveness, efficiency, and equity)

- What contributory/ explanatory factors have affected REACH's performance and results?

- To what extent are the outcomes of REACH likely to be sustainable?

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[1] A full stakeholder analysis is included in Annex B and details of all stakeholders consulted are included in Annex C.

Approach and Methods

5.   The evaluation used a case study approach with mixed methods for data collection. Evaluation questions were guided by the REACH Theory of Change (TOC) (Annex E), and underpinned the development of an evaluation matrix (Annex F). Gender and equity concerns were integrated across the evaluation instruments. The evaluation systematically tested the assumptions underlying REACH's approach and the extent to which REACH partners had a common understanding of REACH's role and operational modalities. Further details of the methodology are provided in the inception report (IR) for the evaluation (Mokoro, 2015b) and in Annex D.

6.   The evaluation conducted 69 discrete global level and over 300 country level interviews (see Annex C). In addition, the evaluation team (ET) met with the REACH Secretariat and its stakeholders during an inception briefing in Rome in January 2015 and attended the REACH Facilitators' workshop in March 2015.

7.   Country case studies (CCS) were done in all eight countries that received funding from DFATD (Bangladesh, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda). Consultants spent eight days[2] in each country.[3] Summaries of the case study background and findings are included in Annex I. Separately, more extensive written reports were also presented to the REACH Secretariat for internal use.

8.   The ET drew upon existing literature (see bibliography at Annex Q), REACH's own internal documents and reports, and secondary data, including nutrition data for each country (see Annex G). REACH also made available to the ET baseline, midline and endline data on indicators from its logframe (Annex H and Annex I).

Limitations

9.   From the outset, the evaluation's TOR limited the scope to the eight Canadian-funded countries, excluding REACH's work in the first three pilot countries and other first generation countries (Niger, Ethiopia, Burundi and Chad), but Sierra Leone was added as a desk study. This meant that the evaluation could not work on the counterfactual – comparing REACH with non-REACH countries – in particular with respect to the facilitating and technical support role that REACH has played. It also implied that the evaluation could only draw to a very limited extent on the information related to the earlier pilot countries. In order to provide this broader perspective the evaluation team conducted a desk study of one of the three pilot countries, Sierra Leone, and undertook interviews with REACH staff and external stakeholders who were involved in the earlier pilot countries.[4]

10.   The evaluation period coincided with key senior management and steering committee meetings around the future of the UN Network for SUN and the decision (made in November 2014 and formalised with a signed MOU in March 2015 (REACH, 2015f) while the evaluation was under way) that the REACH Secretariat would take on the UN Network for SUN and serve as the UN coordinating and focal body on nutrition

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[2] With the exception of Uganda where this was not possible due to flight timing and so seven full days were spent in country.
[3] Travel outside the capital was relevant in Bangladesh, Ghana, Mozambique and Mali as REACH had worked at regional level. In Mali travel outside the capital was impossible due to the security situation, and in Bangladesh security and time factors precluded it. The evaluation team took advice from the REACH facilitators in country as to whether travel was necessary and feasible.
[4] The decision to study Sierra Leone was made with the REACH Secretariat at the beginning of the evaluation process, taking into account that Sierra Leone itself built on the experience of REACH in Laos and Mauritania.

in SUN countries. In parallel, arrangements were being rolled out to fund REACH in additional countries.[5]

11.   The ET sought to keep abreast of these changes during the evaluation process and was briefed by the REACH Secretariat towards the end of the evaluation period regarding the planned changes. The ET took the developments and decisions on REACH into account in its considerations. Nonetheless, the changing nature of REACH over the evaluation period has posed a challenge in terms of the focus of the conclusions and recommendations and the need to review those in light of evolving decisions.

12.   Finally, it should be noted that due to the REACH evaluation study design, no attributions can be made to REACH. Findings are merely observational.

Quality Assurance (QA)

13.   A Technical Panel (TP)[6] was established to review the evaluation deliverables (the IR and the Evaluation Report) and provide feedback to the ET and the interagency joint Evaluation Management Group (EMG). The ET worked closely with the TP and OEV Evaluation Manager, informing them on progress throughout the evaluation process. The OEV Director conducted the second level review and provided clearance of all evaluation products. The EMG was responsible for Quality Assurance and had the authority to carry out first level QA and related decision-making.

1.2   Context

14.   The change in momentum and visibility of nutrition is illustrated by the number of international initiatives since the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition (ICN1) (Annex M). This included the establishment in 2001 of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN, which aims at harmonizing UN nutrition policy and standards across the UN agencies. Around 2008, events converged and catalysed action, bringing nutrition into a more prominent position at global level. This included ***growing scientific consensus*** concerning the causes and consequences of various forms of malnutrition (Lancet, 2008); a growing body of evidence about the impact of malnutrition on a country's economy as society was forced to absorb the cost (Hoddinott et al. 2008 and Horton et al. 2010); and the ***global food price crisis***. This served to highlight issues of food security and vulnerability.

15.   Linked to the call for action raised by publications such as the Lancet was the recognition of the "deeply fragmented and dysfunctional" global aid architecture for nutrition (Lancet, 2008 and global interviews). The organisations and agencies working in nutrition were not aligned or cooperating, funds were scarce, and there was strong competition rather than collaboration. The editorial of the famous Lancet publication of 2008 asked, "who will provide the leadership" on nutrition? This was the start of an acknowledgement that more momentum and ***better global leadership and coordination*** were needed. Against this backdrop, and with a call to action in 2009, the World Bank, some of the UN organisations, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and others formed a small committee and commissioned what

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[5] In some of the first DFATD-funded countries, work has been extended against the original timeframe for engagement (where an extended period was considered important and dependent on mobilisation of additional funding and/or where 'savings' have been made).

[6] Paul Isenman (Independent Consultant), Lola Gostelow (Independent Consultant) and Stephen Anderson (Food Economy Group Consulting).

became the first Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) document – A Framework for Action (SMS, 2010). The document was launched at the World Bank's spring meeting in April 2010 and was the early genesis of the SUN Movement. SUN has since then been established as a multi-stakeholder partnership to scale up nutrition and has progressively expanded to cover 55 countries. The movement focuses on the creation of an enabling political environment, the establishment of best practice for scaling up proven interventions, the alignment of actions around high-quality and well-costed country plans, and an increase in resources, directed towards coherent, aligned approaches. A recent Independent Comprehensive Evaluation (ICE) of SUN confirmed that the SUN movement has rapidly mobilised a broad base of supporters who have shown willingness to collaborate on nutrition, and recommended that a continued phase of SUN was needed to address fundamental design weaknesses and strengthen the implementation of SUN (Mokoro, 2015a). Another key initiative was the establishment in 2011 of the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) which aims at harmonising UN nutrition policy and standards across the UN agencies.[7]

1.3 The REACH Initiative

16.   REACH evolved from the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (ECHUI). ECHUI came about in 2005 as a WFP-led initiative in conjunction with UNICEF. ECHUI aimed to draw private sector funding into nutrition. However, it became clear relatively quickly that ECHUI did not have the necessary buy-in from the UN agencies but that there was an interest in more robust arrangements to support countries to do their planning and programming for nutrition across sectors so that they could approach donors with one plan and one budget.

17.   A small inter-agency group was set up in WFP, including staff from WHO and UNICEF. According to those involved, the aim was not to create something new or to duplicate work being done by others but to "renew" efforts that were already ongoing and to bring about more coherence. This led to the development of REACH. The specific focus of REACH was on mothers and children under five. During the consultation and planning process country-level action was identified as a major gap in moving forward; nutritionists in country were too busy and the group felt that an external facilitator/coordinator might make a significant difference. This resulted in early pilot work, which started in June 2008, before the initiative had a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the four UN agencies.

18.   In the period that followed and before the formal REACH MOU was signed in 2011 (REACH Agencies, 2011), the SUN Movement was created, and REACH worked on refining its tools and methodologies to become multi-sectoral (as opposed to the more public health focused approach that was part of the 2008 Lancet series) and more technically robust. With the signing of the REACH MOU, WFP became the host agency for the REACH Secretariat in a role that is distinct from its role as an initiating partner within the partnership (WFP, 2009a). A governance structure for REACH was set up with a Steering Committee (SC) at global level made up of representatives from the nutrition divisions/sections of its four initiating partners (FAO, UNICEF, WFP and WHO). IFAD was asked to join the SC as a special adviser.

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[7] Formed as the Sub-Committee on Nutrition (SCN) under the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in 1977 and renamed in 2001 to UNSCN.

19.   In each country, the REACH facilitator "facilitates the multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder process…in order to implement change and achieve the four REACH outcomes". A causal chain of change at country level from "awareness, leadership and commitment" (the first outcome, summarised in Figure 1 below as "increased awareness and commitment") through "national nutrition policy" and "national nutrition action plan" (the second outcome: "strengthened national policies and programmes") to the parallel outcomes of "capacity development" ("increased human and institutional capacity") and "monitor and evaluate" ("increased effectiveness and accountability"), leading to the intended result: "improved governance, coverage and nutritional impact".

Figure 1: The REACH Theory of Change - designed by REACH
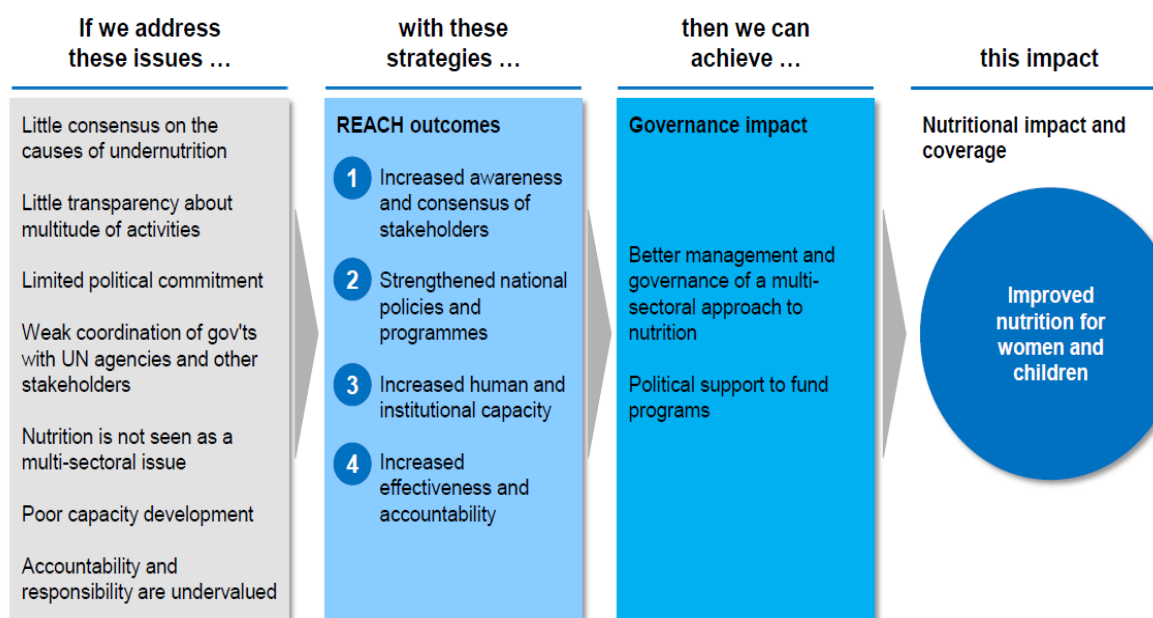
Source: REACH, 2015a: REACH Secretariat – presentation to evaluation team Jan, 2015: p.9

20.   While this presents a clear picture, it is important to note that progress on these counts is contingent on commitment and dedication of the REACH partner agencies and not just the REACH facilitator. It is also important to note that the strategic direction of REACH and its role and objectives have evolved over time. The approach was one of learning by doing and trying to build a progressive way to improve policy and planning at country level. This evolution has resulted in fundamental changes (these are summarised in Annex K). The separated dual outcomes of assuring a one-UN nutrition approach in country (REACH, 2013c; REACH, 2013e) and of supporting government in the development of a multi-sector platform for nutrition governance were adopted late in the evaluation period (2013). Further changes have been made even more recently.[8]

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[8] For more information see: http://scalingupnutrition.org/the-sun-network/un-network

Figure 2: REACH Global and Country Level Structures
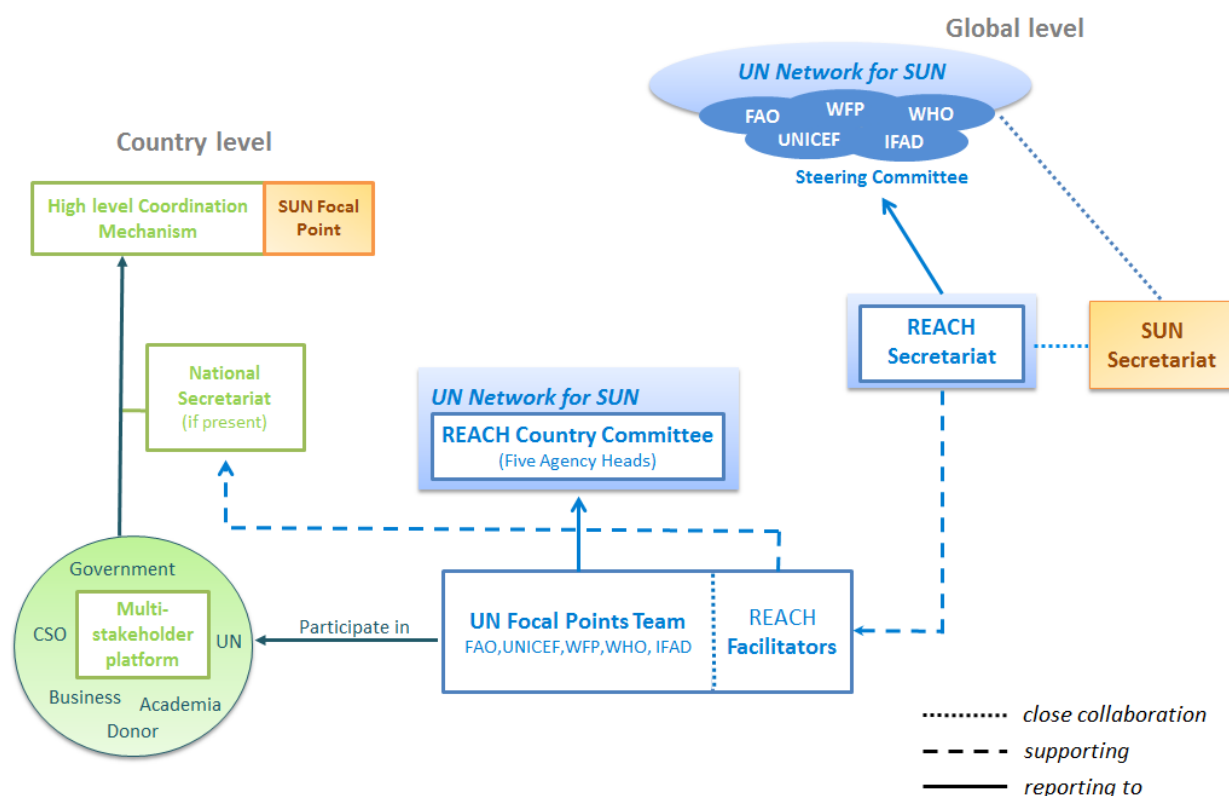
Source: REACH Secretariat, 2015g (REACH Organogram – Global and Country Level)

21. REACH has a secretariat, based in Rome, with a team of 8 staff/consultants and 18 country-based facilitators covering the full range of countries.[9] (See Figure 2, above) The Secretariat provides technical facilitation to REACH countries and liaises with partners globally. REACH facilitators at country level (one or two persons per REACH country) provide facilitating support to the multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder process in order to facilitate change and achieve the four REACH outcomes. The REACH Secretariat and the facilitators work with the tools and guidance materials, which have been developed by REACH to support analytical work in the four outcome areas. Structures vary at country level, with facilitators being based either within one of the UN agencies or within a government institution responsible for nutrition. REACH country level work is guided by a Country Implementation Plan (CIP) as well as annual work plans. Decisions about REACH in-country activities are taken by a REACH Country Committee (RCC), which brings together the Heads of the REACH convening agencies. The day-to-day implementation of REACH is supported by UN nutrition focal points.

22. Table 1 below shows REACH countries by 'generation'. REACH began its operational activities in June 2008 when two Boston Consulting Group (BCG) secondees[10] were sent to Lao PDR and Mauritania to 'pilot' the REACH approach. A year later, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) funded a project *'A Double Benefit of Combating Maternal and Child Malnutrition and Enhancing Market*

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[9] This is the total number of facilitators across all current REACH countries (not only the eight DFATD-funded countries) and is valid as of March 2015, based on data provided by REACH Secretariat (REACH, 2015e).
[10] Funded in part by BCG and by the two WFP country offices in the countries where they were hosted.

Linkages for Smallholder Famers' (BMGF, 2009). Sierra Leone was selected as the pilot country in West Africa for implementation of this project, which was launched in March 2010. Following learning from Lao PDR and Mauritania, two facilitators were recruited – a national facilitator and an international facilitator (REACH Sierra Leone, 2010; REACH Sierra Leone, 2012).

Table 1: REACH Countries by Generation

Countries	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Pilot								
Lao People's Democratic Republic	■	■	■					
Mauritania	■	■	■	■	■			
Sierra Leone			■	■	■			
First generation								
Bangladesh			■	■	■	■	■	■
Ghana				■	■	■	■	■
Mali				■	■	■	■	■
Mozambique				■	■	■	■	■
Nepal				■	■	■	■	■
Rwanda				■	■	■	■	■
United Republic of Tanzania				■	■	■	■	■
Uganda				■	■	■	■	■
Ethiopia						■	■	■
Niger						■	■	■
Burundi						■	■	■
Chad						■	■	■
Second generation								
Burkina Faso							■	■
Haiti							■	■
Senegal							■	■
Myanmar								■
Guinea								■

Source: REACH, September 2015

23.   In March 2011, funding was received from DFATD for REACH in eight countries: Bangladesh, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. A process of preparing Country Implementation Plans (CIPs) was initiated from May 2011. During June to November 2012 facilitators were deployed to these countries (REACH, 2015), which became known within REACH as the "first generation" countries. During the period of this evaluation, work has started in a number of "second generation" countries – Senegal, Haiti, Myanmar and Burkina Faso, also funded by DFATD (REACH, 2015). Other stakeholders have provided funding or 'in-kind' contributions, with some donors providing funds to specific REACH activities, whilst others fund REACH activities overall. Donors have included the European Union, USAID, DFID, UNICEF, WFP, the European Commission's Humanitarian Office (ECHO), and BMGF. EU funding was allocated to start REACH in Niger (grant agreement signed 2012) and in Burundi (receipt of funding pending). Funding was received from USAID for Ethiopia ($1,303,472), and Chad has been self-funded (from in-country donors). Where funding has been an issue (i.e. Chad and Burundi) country-level work has been impeded. A summary of REACH's operational activities can be found in Annex K. Table 2 indicates the main funding sources.

Table 2: REACH Funding sources

Funding source	Amount (*USD*)	Funding period	Target countries
Canada*	11 800 000	2011–2016	Bangladesh, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania
Canada*	3 933 333	2014–2016	Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mali, Myanmar, Senegal
European Union	3 934 735	2012–2016	The Niger
WFP	1 350 000	2013–2015	REACH secretariat support, including the global coordinator position

**Canadian support was provided by Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development.

Source: REACH

24.   During the pilot country and the first generation country experience, the REACH process was more firmly established, formalised, and written down. The REACH Standard Operating Procedures were finalised in 2012 (REACH, 2012a). A facilitators' handbook was compiled during the first pilots and by 2013 had been formulated into a second draft (REACH, 2013f). A "tool kit" was created which included the manual, the REACH Compendium of Actions (REACH, 2015) and the REACH "tools". The REACH monitoring and evaluation framework was finished in 2012 (REACH, 2012c), followed by the monitoring and evaluation methodology and indicator framework (REACH, 2013b). These were refined in 2013 taking account of country experiences and data constraints. To date, there have been no other evaluations of REACH.[11]

REACH and its relationship to SUN

25.   REACH has taken place in the context of other UN and global initiatives on nutrition. The initiative that is in practice closest to REACH is the SUN movement. The aforementioned ICE of SUN (see paragraph 15) considered "REACH and its activities to be part and parcel of the SUN movement, given that REACH co-chairs SUN's global UN Network and is also key in facilitating country engagement in the movement, in those countries where both SUN and REACH are active" (Mokoro, 2015a). While REACH is responsible for supporting SUN processes at the country level by strengthening cooperation and coordination (REACH, 2011), this link with SUN is not included in its high-level outcomes and is not always included in official documentation, although REACH has made consistent efforts to include SUN in its discussions and consultations. Various decision moments and documents have over time sought to make the link clearer and are illustrative of the evolving nature of REACH (see Figure 2).[12]

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[11] Although there has been an evaluation at country level in Lao PDR and Mauritania. In addition, there was also an inter-agency assessment conducted in Lao PDR led by the former Deputy Global Coordinator using the initial REACH M&E framework developed in 2010/2011. This assessment was conducted at roughly the same time as the Mauritania assessment.

[12] In 2013 a specific matrix was developed depicting REACH and SUN support to REACH countries.12 In its most recent annual report (2014), REACH is described as co-facilitating with UNSCN the UN System Network (UN Network) at the global level, which supports the SUN Movement. UNSCN harmonizes UN nutrition policy and standards across the UN agencies. This has since been changed with the decision, in March 2015, that the REACH Secretariat takes on the UN Network for SUN.

2. Evaluation Findings

4.1. How relevant and appropriate is the design of REACH (Evaluation Question 1)?

26.   The evaluation was asked to examine the relevance of REACH. The key findings against each of the relevance questions are discussed in turn below.

a) *Alignment of REACH with the international development agenda and with the priorities of participating countries*

> The design of REACH fits well with the priorities of the international nutrition agenda, especially given its focus on prioritising country-specific and country-led responses, multi-sector action, and the need to scale up funding.
>
> CIP processes were useful in setting priorities at country-level for all stakeholders and in responding to nationally recognized needs and gaps. However, CIP processes were not always sufficiently thorough or participatory to be owned by the countries, and gaps between CIP design and implementation reduced their relevance.

27.   At a theoretical level there was a clear rationale for the establishment of REACH. When REACH was designed, insufficient progress was being made in responding to nutrition challenges – see Chapter 1, paragraph 15. It was clear that better-coordinated responses – based on clear priority setting and pooling and scaling up of resources – were the way to go. That progress has been made since then is highlighted by the external evaluation of SUN which notes progress in the degree of importance given to nutrition on the international agenda (Mokoro, 2015a). However, the same report also points to concurrent continued concerns given the proliferation of initiatives that are not well harmonised and challenges in managing multi-sectoral engagement in the nutrition agenda at the country level, an issue that REACH also aims to address.

28.   Across the country case studies, the evaluation team examined relevant policy and strategy documents available at the time of CIP formulation, reviewed the CIP formulation and approval plans, and questioned a selection of national stakeholders on the issue of relevance. Annual plans were used in all countries to articulate REACH activities in more detail. This analysis showed that REACH outcomes and outputs proposed in the various CIPs did indeed respond to nationally recognized priorities and gaps. The process was useful as it provided a systematic approach for reviewing the context and included consultation with key stakeholders.[13]

29.   Three issues were highlighted across a number of the case studies. First, the CIP drafting processes were conducted under a very tight time-line (set by the donor) which affected the consultation process in some cases and put strain on the REACH Secretariat. Secondly, the delay between CIP drafting and the arrival of the facilitators (reportedly due to delays in approval of the CIPs) had implications for the relevance of some of the CIP activities, and in some cases for the CIP as a whole. This rendered some of the specific planned activities less relevant as they had either already been

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[13] In most countries this included consultations with country stakeholders from the UN and beyond and a multi-stakeholder workshop to solicit views from a range of stakeholders.

done or were no longer needed. It also meant that in practice the annual plans became a better reflection of what the REACH set out to do. It also affected the take-up of REACH in some contexts as some of the people who had been involved in the CIP process had already moved on (e.g. in Bangladesh, Tanzania and Rwanda). The third issue was that in some countries informants expressed a concern that the process had been too externally driven (coming from headquarters) and not sufficiently in-depth or participatory to get an adequate feel for the needs, to drive priority setting, and to secure a strong level of buy-in (e.g. in Ghana). Changes have reportedly been made in the planning process for the generation 2 countries to address many of these limitations.

b) Coherence with the mandates and capacities of the four UN agencies, including with the gender and equity objectives

> REACH's objectives were in line with the nutrition priorities of the four participating agencies, including their gender and equity objectives. However, REACH did not always make sufficient use of existing UN tools (guidance and manuals) or effectively leverage UN agencies' nutrition capacity to improve coordination and scale-up nutrition responses in country. At the country level, competition for funding among the four agencies and with REACH has affected the level of coherence.

30.   The mandates of the four UN REACH agencies include nutrition-relevant objectives, as well as objectives related to gender and equity (see summary at Annex N). REACH's overall objectives – including in terms of equity and gender – were found by the evaluation to be in line with those of the UN REACH agencies.

31.   In terms of the capacity dimension of relevance, at global level informants expressed some concern and provided examples of ways in which they felt that REACH, while complementary and coherent in theory, in practice was not building sufficiently on what agencies themselves were already doing. Examples were given of "REACH tools" sometimes overlapping or duplicating the work that individual agencies were doing and REACH not sufficiently using agencies' existing tools or promoting the role of these agencies, for example, in capacity building. Reservations were expressed about the proliferation of tools, including those produced by other agencies, and on the complexity of some of the REACH tools, which make updating by local technical staff difficult.

32.   A number of external global-level informants also expressed the opinion that there had been a tension caused by REACH working essentially through the production of new tools and through the provision of technical support, rather than working through UN agencies to use UN tools and UN capacity to ensure that these agencies better use their existing tools and expertise in favour of the nutrition response.

33.   At country level, competition between the UN REACH agencies (for funding but also for dominance in a particular nutrition agenda) and a lack of buy-in of the REACH process by UN agencies were highlighted as affecting the level of coherence in practice (see section 2.3). For example, in some countries (e.g. Ghana) UNICEF has been engaged in getting funding for governance, which has overlapped with the REACH mandate.

c) Coherence, alignment, complementarity between REACH and global and national nutrition initiatives (including SUN) and programmes

In a crowded nutrition environment, which includes the related SUN movement and UNSCN initiatives, the establishment of REACH as another initiative was contested, and continues to be questioned by some global stakeholders. There is little understanding of REACH beyond the people directly involved. The evaluation found various contributory factors for this, including lack of operational buy-in REACH's low-profile facilitating role and focus on the country-level country level, and its limited range of global-level partnerships.

At country level, the evaluation found that REACH has complemented the work of the SUN Movement (by providing facilitating support for SUN activities at country level) and is considered by stakeholders to be well aligned and coherent with nutrition work by government, donors and civil society. It was easier to achieve complementarity at country level because the main focus of REACH has been on Government coordination. Efforts in UN coordination have been undertaken by REACH but have had less emphasis. As a result, REACH is not seen as UN-specific.

34. While the establishment of REACH was coherent with the priorities of the nutrition agenda at the time (see under a) above), the creation of a specific UN initiative met with considerable initial resistance from other UN agencies as well as externally from other nutrition initiatives.

35. The various sources also converged in the opinion that there continues to be insufficient clarity on the role of REACH. For a variety of reasons stakeholders recognised that there "has never been full buy-in to REACH" from the UN agencies (global interviewee). This has resulted in missed opportunities for REACH as SUN was created as and essentially took the role of being an overarching global movement for nutrition. Despite this, REACH has kept trying, refocusing at country level, and providing country-level support to SUN – so that it can be said that "SUN countries receiving support from REACH have done better" (SUN Movement interviewee).

36. With the exception of those very close to REACH (e.g. staff of SUN and members of the SCN), global interviewees had limited understanding of how REACH complemented the work of SUN. The need for an initiative that is separate from the SUN movement was questioned numerous times by the global interviewees. Critical questions were also raised on the rationale for a specific initiative to coordinate the UN response. The evaluation finds that this question has been a recurring one, which despite efforts by REACH respond and to explain the separate and different roles remains a key question for external stakeholders.

37. At country level, in some cases, there were initial challenges in terms of coherence with the work of the SUN movement. This was the case in Ghana, for example, where the lack of understanding on how REACH would complement SUN generated a lot of initial confusion and affected the degree of ownership of REACH.

38. At the time of the evaluation, however, the challenges of REACH and SUN alignment appeared to have been largely left behind in most countries. In all the case study countries, stakeholders emphasised that the REACH facilitators have been providing valuable support to the SUN Focal Points and have been critical to advancing the nutrition agenda which is essentially a Government-led, multi-sectoral agenda, and not only a UN one.

39.   Relevance with respect to what other agencies outside the UN were doing was not identified as problematic at country level. In most cases, the facilitating role of the nutrition response that REACH has played in practice, and the development and implementation of the CIPs, has allowed REACH to be coherent with the work of these agencies.

d) Alignment and contribution to equity (including gender equality)

> REACH was designed to align with and contribute to equity - including gender equality. However, CIPs were uneven in clarifying the extent to which these issues would be addressed through improved planning, advocacy and monitoring.

40.   In terms of gender and equity, REACH was designed to align with and contribute to equity (including gender equality). Each of the CIPs had a specific annex on gender which outlined the gender dimensions and showed how these would be addressed.

41.   Most CIPs also included attention to gender at the level of activity planning. However, in some countries the translation of the CIP approach into concrete activities and indicators at the planning stage was less pronounced. This was the case in Bangladesh, Ghana, Mozambique, and Tanzania. Country interviews confirmed that in these countries REACH had highlighted, through its tools and analyses, some of the specific causes and consequences of women's vulnerability, but that as an initiative it was not strongly associated with having drawn specific attention to how to address this through improved planning, advocacy and monitoring. In Bangladesh, for example, the CIP did not mention the word 'equity'. It did set out the gender issues in national nutrition challenges in some detail, but the actual design of REACH actions only mentioned that "REACH can provide a better understanding and documentation of ... the impact of gender and social exclusion on nutrition outcomes". Indeed, in the REACH participatory advocacy video, gender was a key theme. However, gender was not mentioned in the CIP logical framework.

e) Validity of REACH's logic model including potential of REACH's design/activities to lead to its intended outcomes and impacts

The assumptions of the TOC at output to outcome level were found to be relevant for the most part. The validity of the TOC is challenged by major assumptions from the outcome to the impact level. In particular, the evaluation found only limited supporting evidence for the assumption that the commitment of stakeholders is a direct result of increased awareness of and consensus on nutrition problems and that REACH, through its key agents (the country facilitators, UN focal points and Heads of Agencies), can influence power relations so that country governments and key nutrition players including UN agencies place nutrition at the top of their agenda. The evaluation was able to find relatively strong evidence with respect to the first assumption that the establishment of the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches that REACH has facilitated at country level has indeed contributed to more awareness and better priority-setting across the eight case study countries. However, the evaluation was not able to find conclusive support for the second assumption, that inter-agency/inter-sectoral collaboration is the most efficient mechanisms for delivering on the outcome of reduced malnutrition.

The TOC did not sufficiently take account of external factors that have remained largely beyond REACH's control to date. High-level political commitment by Governments, the political economy of the UN (which remains beyond the grasp of REACH), and the lack of clear accountability and incentives for support to REACH within the UN. Finally, the timeframes of REACH have been highly ambitious in practice and the evaluation CCS findings underscore that the assumption that a 2-3 year period of catalytic support would be enough is in practice erroneous.

42. In preparation for the evaluation process the ET reviewed the REACH TOC and REACH logframes and developed an expanded version of the TOC, which included the full range of assumptions at different levels; it used this as a basis for developing the evaluation questions (Mokoro, 2015b). To assess the validity of the REACH TOC the ET tested the assumptions behind the TOC through its different routes of inquiry: interviews, group meetings, and country case studies.

43. The evaluation's evaluability report highlighted two main outcome to impact assumptions behind REACH, namely that:

- A multisectoral approach is the most effective approach to address undernutrition.

- Inter-agency collaboration is the most efficient mechanism for delivering on the outcome of reduced undernutrition (Khogali, 2013; p.13).

44. In essence, this involves assessing whether the extra effort and complexity of co-ordinated multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches are actually warranted by the extra effectiveness that they may achieve.

45. The evaluation was able to find relatively strong evidence with respect to the first assumption that the establishment of the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches that REACH has facilitated at country level has indeed contributed to more awareness and better priority-setting across the case study countries. The available evidence therefore supports this assumption.

46. However, the evaluation was not able to find conclusive support for the second assumption, that inter-agency/ intersectoral collaboration is the most efficient

mechanism for delivering on the impact of reduced undernutrition.

47.   While there are some indications that the joint work at country level has helped galvanise action at local/ decentralized levels, the link between this and the envisioned impact of reduced undernutrition remained to be demonstrated and is thus elusive. The time factor may play a role here, in particular given the evaluation's findings with respect to the time frame for REACH (see paragraph 140). The challenges in monitoring progress on malnutrition given the relatively long time frames between data collection by demographic and health surveys and the like may also have contributed to the lack of findings. Other explanations likely relate to some of the more specific output to outcome level assumptions behind REACH (see Annex E for the reconstructed TOC and assumptions).

Box 1: UN Collaboration

In countries where REACH is active, the UN is acknowledged to be working better together (the degree to which this has happened is context specific). In these countries, Government is also clearer on the gaps in nutrition and on what needs to be done to address them.

48.   One of these assumptions is that the commitment of stakeholders to support nutrition actions is a direct result of increased awareness of and consensus on the nutrition problems and how to address these problems. The work at country level which is discussed under outcomes 1 and 2 (see sections 4.1 and 2.2) demonstrates that progress has been made in awareness- and consensus-building. However, across the different case study countries the findings also show that commitment of stakeholders, in particular in terms of scaling up funding and support, has yet to be convincingly forthcoming. There appear to be two predominant reasons for this:

- First, the CCS highlight how the overall context has become more challenging in terms of access to funding and a declining number of donors in countries such as Mozambique and Ghana, with funding as a critical element for being able to implement country nutrition plans.

- Secondly, and probably more importantly, the TOC does not try to address the technical and funding competition between UN agencies. In other words, in the absence of very specific directives (or a strong government that insists on this), there is no real incentive for UN agencies, or other partners, to take coordination as seriously as the REACH TOC intended. In this context there was no conclusive support for a rather fundamental assumption of REACH, namely that facilitators at country level (who are the main REACH agents) can move barriers that exist between UN agencies. The country experience shows that this is only true to a limited extent and that external factors including political will, incentive mechanisms, accountability mechanisms, and personalities play a much greater role. It therefore remains to be conclusively demonstrated that REACH can enhance governance (decision-making and power relations) and not just structure.

49.   An important additional and recurring observation on the REACH TOC was that it does not take account of the critical importance of the degree of high-level political engagement and commitment. The extent to which such commitment is critical is exemplified by the country case studies in Mozambique and Tanzania, where the levels of commitment/engagement experienced have been at different ends of the scale. The case of Mozambique highlights that without strong leadership the two aforementioned elements of the TOC are likely to have limited impact. This is clearly

an exogenous factor, but nonetheless one that the CCS show to be of considerable importance.

50.   The next section of the report deals with the performance of REACH (EQ2). It looks in turn at a) the effectiveness, b) the efficiency and c) the equity of REACH, and for each provides a summary assessment by the evaluation.

2.2 How has REACH performed at country level? (Evaluation Question 2)

51.   The evaluation assessed performance against targets set in CIPs and in annual plans, drawing on REACH's monitoring data and the findings from the case studies. REACH activities are designed to produce multi-sectoral outputs. Table 3 lists the most common outputs observed in CIP.

Table 3: Selected REACH Outputs

Stakeholder and activity maps
Core Nutrition actions selection
Investment cases
Joint nutrition communication and advocacy strategies
Integration of nutrition into national and United Nations development strategies
National nutrition policies/action plans
Multi-sector nutrition coordination mechanisms
Institutional and human capacity for nutrition in government
Accountability matrix for food and nutrition security at the national and district levels
Nutrition monitoring system
Establishment of nutrition as a focus area for the United Nations Delivering as One

2 a) Performance at country level – effectiveness

52.   REACH was designed to work towards the following mutually reinforcing outcomes: Outcome 1 – Increased awareness of the problem and of potential solutions; Outcome 2 – Strengthened national nutrition policies and programmes; Outcome 3 – Increased capacity at all levels; and Outcome 4 – Increased efficiency and accountability. The discussion below draws on the analysis from the country case studies that this evaluation conducted, from global level interviews with internal and external stakeholders, and from the REACH M&E data. Under each outcome area we provide an overview of how REACH scored in the comparison of baseline and endline data in the countries, which we compare with the findings from this evaluation.

53.   The CIP development process sought to identify to what extent the full range of outputs under these outcome areas (of which a total of 14 were identified in the REACH log frame) were relevant, and to tailor the REACH 'menu' to the country situation and priorities. This was done by identifying priority areas of work (4 to 5 per country). In most of the CIPs, the priority areas identified were also the ones where most of the REACH funding was then allocated at country level.

Outcome 1 – Increased awareness of the problem and of potential solutions

Country level evidence shows that – partly in association with SUN – REACH effectively contributed to increased awareness of nutrition problems and potential solutions, and helped to build national commitment. However, of the four outputs under this area, stakeholder and activity mapping (the most prominent) was considered over complex and difficult to update. Over the period reviewed, REACH made significant but in most cases incomplete progress with joint communications and advocacy strategies. Investment cases for nutrition at country level were the area where least progress was made, with this output removed from the priorities in view of other initiatives (such as the Cost of Hunger Profiles). This implied missed opportunities to leverage resources for nutrition priorities as originally envisaged.

54.   This outcome area sought to bring about increased understanding of nutrition challenges at country level and to engage stakeholders in identification of and commitment to solutions. The assumption behind the focus on awareness and solutions is that policy-makers, UN colleagues and non-technical practitioners will often only have a partial picture of the nutrition situation, will thus have a limited understanding of undernutrition and its consequences, and as a result will demonstrate limited commitment to the processes.

Box 2: Stakeholder mapping in Nepal

Nepal is the only country where the stakeholder mapping process became a regular part of the monitoring process. In Nepal, the mapping tool was incorporated as an online form into the country's Nutrition and Food Security Portal, to allow yearly updates as well as additions of new stakeholders. It is, however, important to note that in Nepal it did not include coverage data. This approach addresses the sustainability issue raised in other countries such as Tanzania. The mapping itself took place early on in REACH's engagement in Nepal. However, its dissemination was delayed because of data quality problems, creating some frustration among stakeholders.

55.   The REACH process in country therefore focused on broadening this understanding. It used the REACH facilitators, additional human resources provided by REACH (consultants, interns), and the tools and processes that REACH has developed over time to support national governments in broadening this understanding. The process included conducting in-depth scoping and analysis to develop a detailed and comprehensive agreed snapshot of the country's nutrition situation – the Nutrition Analysis – which identified nutrition-related issues and formed the basis for a detailed activity mapping for key actions for prioritisation and bringing to scale. It also included developing, with the wider nutrition community, an advocacy strategy to move forward the nutrition response (alongside other advocacy efforts), and drawing up an investment case for nutrition as part of the advocacy response.

56.   **Stakeholder and activity mapping** was the first key output under this area. The activity was conducted in all eight countries, with the majority using the REACH Scaling Up Nutrition Planning and Monitoring Tool (SUNPMT)[14] (although this was not used in e.g. Bangladesh and Mozambique). This is an Excel-based database

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[14] This has been renamed and refined and is now called the Scaling Up Nutrition Planning and Monitoring Tool.

instrument, with presentation templates developed in PowerPoint and capturing information on a range of stakeholders from various SUN networks. It was refined in 2014.

57.   The CCS found that the stakeholder mapping activity was appreciated in most countries, even though it was not considered a priority area in most country CIPs. It was considered critical in bringing about a broad information-sharing process. It was also seen as instrumental in guiding decision-making regarding geographic targeting of interventions and resource allocation. The enthusiasm for the mapping is illustrated by the fact that CCS found the most visible and talked about activity of REACH in Rwanda, Tanzania and Mozambique was the work in these countries on stakeholder and activity mapping (conducted in 2012/13, 2013 (and again in 2014) and 2013/14 respectively).

58.   In Ghana, too, the mapping that was done in the three northern regions was reported to have changed the way some actors viewed nutrition and had galvanised multi-sector working at regional level. In three countries the stakeholder mapping faced limitations. In Mali it overlapped with other initiatives and its incremental value was small. In Bangladesh, the National Nutrition Service adopted a different methodology following preliminary mapping facilitated by REACH. In Uganda, coverage of the mapping exercise was very limited.

Table 4: Stakeholder and activity mapping

	Planned budget $	Coverage	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E
Bangladesh	60,000	Nationwide	Buy-in limited. NNS chose not to use REACH tool and adopted a different system	Completed, outdated
Ghana	65,000	All districts in 3 Northern regions	Galvanised multi-sector working at regional level	Completed & disseminated
Mali	55,000	2 regions	Limited stakeholder interest for the mapping exercise as much produced by clusters	Completed & disseminated
Mozambique	47,000	Nationwide at provincial level	Useful in starting up a dialogue and getting commitment to the nutrition planning	Completed and disseminated
Nepal	60,000	Nationwide with information disaggregated at district level	Only country where mapping tool incorporated as an online form into the country's Nutrition and Food Security Portal	Completed and current
Rwanda	40,000	Nationwide	Useful in gaps identification, action prioritisation and mobilisation of a wider range of stakeholders and donors	Completed/Being updated
Tanzania	60,000	In districts covered by ANI	Useful in decision-making and programming. Concern about sustainability	Completed and disseminated
Uganda	30,000	In districts covered by ANI (6 out of 112 districts)	Concern as to how the mapping would be maintained and updated	Completed and disseminated

Activity considered a priority in this country.

59.   **Selection of core nutrition actions for expected results.** As table 5 shows, this output was not considered a REACH priority area in any of the countries. However, evidence from selected case study countries, notably Bangladesh (Box 3), Ghana and Tanzania, indicates that this activity was in fact useful. In Ghana, REACH work in the north stimulated district priority-setting and resource allocation. In Tanzania, REACH organised the first multi-sector nutrition review workshop. This resulted in high-level buy-in from government. In Nepal multi-sector/multi-stakeholder meetings were organised centrally and at district level to identify and prioritise nutrition activities.

Table 5: Selection of core nutrition actions

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E
Bangladesh	0 (Merged with 2.3, 2.4.)	Common narrative on undernutrition regarded by most informants as an important REACH achievement	No
Ghana	10,000	REACH's work in the three northern districts enabled district mapping, planning and priority setting	Yes
Mali	0	Not done because, data already available at clusters level	Yes
Mozambique	0 (Integrated with Outputs 2.3, 3.)	Further prioritization required, stakeholder meetings planned. Selection of 17 priority nutrition interventions.	Yes
Nepal	0 (Merged with 2.3, 2.4.)	Done in the 6 MSNP priority districts	Yes
Rwanda	0	23 CPIs for the NFNSP (2013-2018) selected and approved by the FNTWG in February 2015	Yes
Tanzania	10,000	First multi-sector nutrition review workshop resulted in high-level government buy-in but also the identification of priority actions	Yes
Uganda	0	Finalized in October 2014	Yes

Activity considered a priority in this country.

Box 3: Bangladesh: the 'Common Narrative'

One of the major achievements of REACH in Bangladesh was the preparation and publication of a 'Common Narrative on Undernutrition'. REACH facilitated the consultative process between the four UN agencies, USAID, DFATD, the World Bank, DFID and the EU. While interpreted by some informants as constituting undue pressure on government to follow certain approaches in nutrition, this exercise was meant to reduce the confusion being generated by different agencies transmitting different nutrition messages to government, and was widely endorsed for achieving this harmonisation

60.   **Joint communications and advocacy strategy (JCAS).** This output was considered a REACH priority area in Bangladesh, Ghana, Nepal, Rwanda and Tanzania (Table 3). REACH support was mainly through facilitation of working groups (such as in Nepal and Mozambique) or task force (as in Uganda) and support to facilitation through hiring of consultants or appointment of volunteers (as in Bangladesh, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, and Tanzania). By the end of the review period, the progress was mixed: achieving final official approval for the strategies was often a slow and complex process, not yet complete in Bangladesh, Mali,[15] or Mozambique (and only recent endorsement and approval of the strategy in Nepal, following the earthquake in April 2015). This typifies a challenge for REACH and similar initiatives: strategy documents can be prepared, and eventually approved, but this does not guarantee the depth of commitment that will lead to meaningful implementation of such plans.

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[15] In Mali it is a communications plan rather than a nutrition advocacy strategy.

Table 6: Joint communications and advocacy strategy

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E
Bangladesh	45,000	After document finalized, government decision to separate advocacy and communications into two documents (in process)	Completed
Ghana	20,000	Advocacy plan drafted in 2011/2012 but not adopted. UN Advocacy and Communication plan prepared.	Completed
Mali	30,000	Communication plan developed; national advocacy strategy to be developed in 2015	Not completed
Mozambique	25,000	National Advocacy and Communications Plan for Nutrition approved in 2014 by Ministry of Agriculture.	Completed and adopted
Nepal	45,000	Communications and advocacy strategy developed and translated to Nepali. The strategy was endorsed and officially launched after the earthquake; 7 districts identified for expansion of MSNP in 2015-16.	Completed
Rwanda	50,000	Development of/continued roll-out of the "A Thousand Days in the Land of a Thousand Hills" campaign	Completed and adopted
Tanzania	60,000	In 2014, a National Advocacy Strategy was developed and in final stages. Development of a UN advocacy and communication plan.	Completed
Uganda	0	Nutrition Advocacy and Communication (NAC) Strategy to be launched in 2015	Completed

       Activity considered a priority in this country.

61. **Investment case.** Progress on this output was mixed. In view of other initiatives already being supported by other partners, such as the AU/WFP Cost of Hunger assessments and the PROFILES supported by USAID, REACH's initial intention to support investment cases as a priority was reviewed. While tangible results were achieved in Rwanda, this activity was not performed in Bangladesh, Mozambique, Nepal or Uganda. In Tanzania and Mali, REACH collaborated with efforts led by others, such as USAID in Tanzania or civil society in Mali. This output was considered a REACH priority area in Mali and Mozambique, but not in the other countries (table 7). According to the REACH M&E indicator 1.3 the "Cost-Benefit Analysis" (target 20) was reached in six countries: Bangladesh, Ghana, Mali, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. However, the findings from the evaluation show that this might be too optimistic an assessment and again it does not capture the nuances of the country situations, as is highlighted in the Bangladesh example (Box 4).

62. Overall, interviews indicated that REACH contributed to increased commitment and understanding of the issues at country level. In some countries (e.g. Mozambique), this included commitment by the REACH UN agencies, which were reported to be giving more priority to nutrition. However, other contextual factors were also mentioned as having played a role here, including the existence of a strong government planning and coordination tradition (in the case of Mozambique).

Table 7: Investment case

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E
Bangladesh	30,000	WB tool proved too complicated for use at district level. No investment case, other tools and the Common Narrative developed; PROFILES published 2012.	Completed and disseminated
Ghana	20,000	In 2014 a cost of hunger analysis conducted to be launched in 2015 June (still to be confirmed); PROFILES published 2012.	Completed and disseminated
Mali	90,000	Assistance to the civil society in updating the profile tools. Assessed costs of the 170 actions in its multi-sectoral plan in 2014.	Completed and disseminated
Mozambique	30,000	Cost of hunger analysis being prepared.	Not completed
Nepal	30,000	UNICEF made a commitment to undertake an investment case in 2014. However, this was not completed. On behalf of the NPC, REACH undertook a study on Funding Modalities for MSNP in 2013 and in 2014 a study on Finance Tracking Options for MSNP (supported by MQSUN).	Not completed
Rwanda	30,000	Costing of the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan and that of MINAGRI. Cost of Hunger study complete in 2013.	Completed and disseminated
Tanzania	n/a	PROFILES done in 2014.	Completed and disseminated
Uganda	25,000	Cost of Hunger study completed and published in 2013.	Completed and disseminated

Activity considered a priority in this country.

Box 4: Bangladesh: 'multi-sectoral simulation tool'

In Bangladesh, the initial intention (2011–2013) was that REACH would partner for this purpose with the World Bank, which was developing a 'Multi-Sectoral Simulation Tool' to help the Government of Bangladesh identify and then implement cost-effective interventions that would generate a significant improvement in nutritional outcomes. The exercise was unsuccessful from the REACH perspective, as the tool proved too complicated for use at district level, as had been intended. There were no sustainable results.

63. It was also noted that this should not be seen as an achievement of REACH on its own. In this area, in particular, the work of SUN, and the work with SUN, has also been important. In practice REACH and SUN have been closely intertwined – with REACH providing support to the implementation of SUN processes at country level. This occurs through having REACH facilitators taking on a considerable work load for SUN in terms of supporting SUN Focal Points, organising meetings, supporting the implementation of the SUN MPTF funding for CSOs, facilitating SUN self-assessment exercises, etc.

64. Stakeholders at global level also concurred that REACH has been important in bringing about increasing awareness of nutrition issues and priorities. In fact, increasing awareness is one of the areas that nutrition experts highlight as being the main achievement over the past years. "We have succeeded in changing mind-sets and the way people work together and that is really challenging – that is a really huge achievement. When people change, it sets a different tone and a different climate and this sets the stage for a broad influence". However, key actors on the global scene were sceptical about the extent to which the commitment at global level had changed

practice by UN agencies in a more fundamental way.

Outcome 2 – Strengthening national nutrition policies and programmes

As countries' baselines differed, progress varied considerably. In most countries, REACH contributed to advancing national or subnational plans by drafting or contributing to processes that ensured this approval. In Ghana and Mozambique, engagement through REACH inspired a new intensity of nutrition planning at sub-national levels. However, plans in all eight countries remained unimplemented because funding was lacking. In two countries, institutional limitations precluded progress towards this outcome.

Overall, this Outcome was about policy and planning rather than implementation. It was beyond the scope of this evaluation to assess the quality of the plans that would be developed, and in any event the best test of this would be the quality of subsequent implementation – which largely lies in the future.

65.   For this outcome area, the focus of REACH was to ensure that the inter-sectoral approach to nutrition was integrated into policy documents and plans at the government level. REACH focused on supporting governments to provide multi-sector responses to address the root causes of undernutrition, bringing together stakeholders from different sectors to have a common vision. Three main areas of work were planned under this outcome area: the review and enhancement of multi-sectoral nutrition policy/action plans; the integration of core nutrition actions into national sector work plans (from a multi-sectoral perspective); and the drafting of sub-national development plans in nutrition.

66.   Before discussing the details of progress against these three areas, it is important to note two important cross-cutting contextual factors that played a role in the progress that was made in strengthening national policies and programmes.[16] The first factor was the interaction between SUN and REACH and how this influenced what REACH did in each country. The engagement with SUN varied by country but it was clear from the case studies that across the different contexts SUN took up a substantial portion of the REACH facilitators' time. In some cases this work provided opportunities for a more intimate interaction with government and other actors. In other cases – and sometimes in parallel in the same country – it clearly created a level of tension. In Bangladesh, for example, the most intimate, thorough and on-going interaction between REACH and government systems was around REACH support for the SUN Focal Point in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. SUN took over much of the international facilitator's time, even though this was not officially part of her job description. Despite this major contribution, government remained critical of the REACH support, arguing that it was too independent of, and not always fully compliant with, government interests. While government expected REACH to provide technical assistance and support for SUN, REACH was designed to provide facilitation services – a different mode of operation.

67.   The second contextual factor was REACH's dependence on institutional, policy and political conditions in each of the countries. In Bangladesh these conditions spanned the factional, the impenetrable and the dysfunctional. Even with assorted bouts of strategic opportunism there were limits to what REACH could achieve. In other countries too, the contextual factor was extremely important. For example, in

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[16] These cross-cutting factors clearly also applied to the other outcomes also.

Mozambique the work of REACH (and SUN) coincided in many ways with a period of cooling relations between the government and donors, which challenged the idea that awareness will translate into priority-setting.

68. **Integration of nutrition into national and UN development strategies.** In some countries (Ghana, Nepal, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda), this output was superfluous as designed: nutrition was already integrated into national and/or UN development strategies and plans (UNDAFs and, in the case of Tanzania and Rwanda, the UNDAP) (see 0 below). In Rwanda, REACH also provided support to the integration of nutrition into the EDPRS II. In Bangladesh, however, REACH was able to make a direct contribution (Box 5).

Box 5: Bangladesh: integrating nutrition into national planning

In **Bangladesh**, despite no initial budget allocation, REACH ended up doing important work in this field. While nutrition was already a priority in the 2012–2016 UNDAF, REACH facilitated efforts in 2014–2015 to give it a higher profile in the forthcoming 7th Five Year Development Plan, 2016–2021 by employing consultants to work on a background paper on nutrition for the Plan development – a first for Bangladesh.

Table 8: Integration into national and UN development strategies

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings: national	Evaluation Findings: UN	REACH M&E
Bangladesh	0	Despite no initial budget allocation, REACH facilitated efforts in 2014-2015 to give nutrition a higher profile in the forthcoming 7th Five Year Development Plan, 2016-2021 (consultants prepared a background paper)	Nutrition already a priority in the 2012-2016 UNDAF	Yes
Ghana	0	REACH worked with key sectors and the National Development Planning Commission to draft the national development strategy (Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda) with support from a REACH intern	Food security and nutrition already a priority thematic area in the UNDAF	Yes
Mali	0	Technical and financial assistance to the drafting of national development strategy (Strategic Framework for Growth and Poverty Reduction) for nutrition (2014-2018), but strategy not well prioritized		Yes
Mozambique	15,000	National development plan PARP already developed before REACH already included attention to nutrition. Throughout 2014-2015, REACH advocated for nutrition to be integrated in new Five Year Plan.	UNDAF already included a focus on nutrition and therefore not in need of specific action. The drafting of a joint UN nutrition strategy, planned for 2014 was moved to 2015 to align it with the UNDAF preparation process	Yes
Nepal	0	Government's Three Year Plan MSNP was in progress when the CIP formulation mission took place but was finalized and endorsed before the REACH facilitators' appointment.	Food security and nutrition already a priority thematic area in the UNDAF	Yes
Rwanda	15,000	Nutrition already reflected as a national development priority in the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2013–2018. REACH advocated for nutrition to be integrated in the new government five year plan.	Food security and nutrition already in UNDAP. REACH supported development of 2013-2018 UNDAP with nutrition integrated.	Yes

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings: national	Evaluation Findings: UN	REACH M&E
Tanzania	Not applicable	Although considered NR (food security and nutrition already in National Development Plans MKUKUTA II and MKUZA II), REACH consultant helped develop the Nutrition Vision 2025 paper, and worked with TFNC to develop a technical paper to inform the review of the National Food and Nutrition Policy, the National Nutrition Strategy and the National Development Strategy	Food security and nutrition already in UNDAP	Yes
Uganda	Not applicable	UNAP was already in existence and had not been changed since REACH's arrival, REACH produced a strategic paper for integrating nutrition in the national development plan.	REACH team in Uganda developed a UN Nutrition Strategy with inputs from all four UN Partner agencies	Yes

69. **Review and enhancement of multi-sector National Nutrition Policy/Action Plan.** As table 9 shows, REACH planning considered this output a priority area in Ghana, and Mali and not applicable in Tanzania and Uganda. In fact, no specific activities, other than facilitation, were listed except in Ghana. The baseline and endline data for indicator 2.2 "Nutrition Action Plan" is captured under outcome indicators 2a (State of Policy) and 2b (State of Action Plan) for all countries. In Mozambique at the time REACH started there was already a Multi-sectoral Action Plan for the Reduction of Chronic Undernutrition. In Ghana and Mali, REACH did contribute to the drafting of national nutrition action plans and in Rwanda REACH supported the review of the National Food and Nutrition Policy (2013) and the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan (2013–2018).

70. REACH did make some contributions elsewhere too. Informants in Rwanda stated that it facilitated development of the new multi-sector policy and strategy documents. Similar inputs were made in Tanzania, with REACH support for the drafting of technical planning papers. But in Bangladesh, REACH made little headway in efforts to facilitate finalisation of the new National Nutrition Policy (replacing the one of 1997), which had been in draft since 2012.

Table 9: Review and enhancement of multi-sector National Nutrition Policy/Action Plan

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings
Bangladesh	10,000	Little progress was made towards this result (with contextual factors – such as limits on staff mobility due to security risks affecting progress). Nutrition continues to be addressed through the parallel plans and programmes in the food and health sectors
Ghana	55,000	REACH is credited by stakeholders as having given a major push the nutrition policy (carrying out an overview, with support from a REACH intern, meetings with sector representatives and other nutrition stakeholders to review various drafts, and following up action from meetings
Mali	90,000	REACH's contribution the development of the national nutrition action plan which is based on 14 key axes is the first attempt to action the multi-sectoral nutrition strategy in Mali
Mozambique	0	At the time that REACH started there was already a national nutrition plan (the PAMRDC). REACH participated in the PAMRDC mid-term review. Policy Overview under way.
Nepal	10,000	Several REACH-facilitated workshops (in which officials of all relevant ministries participated) contributed to consensus building when developing new multi-sector policy and strategy.
Rwanda	14,000	REACH Rwanda supported the review of the National Food and Nutrition Policy (2013) and the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan (2013-2018) including workshops with partners and hiring consultants.
Tanzania	NA	In 2013 – REACH was invited to support the review of the 1992 Nutrition Policy See also above output

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings
Uganda	NA	Policy Overview under way. Updated UNAP costed plan of action. UNAP M&E framework developed

        Activity considered a priority in this country.
NA   *Not applicable*
No REACH M&E scores – this output is measured under Outcome 2 Indicators 2A and 2B

71.   **Integration of core nutrition actions into annual workplans of relevant ministries/sectors.** This output was to be achieved through drafting of planning templates and/or supporting tools in Bangladesh, Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda, and general facilitation/technical assistance in the other countries. In Nepal, REACH supported meetings and training officials to ensure integration of nutrition priorities into work plans. Various tools were developed/refined to support planning exercises (such as the SUN-PMT in 2014 and the Policy Overview template in 2015).

72.   The assumption underlying this output was that priority nutrition activities were agreed and that institutional systems and procedures were in place to allow them to be integrated into annual work plans. In Bangladesh, parallel programmes were established under two different ministries reflecting a challenging working environment (with political upheaval, complex environment, security constraints). REACH was able to make better progress in Mali and Mozambique, although in the latter case it remained a challenge to get ministries to shoulder their respective responsibilities. It helped to integrate nutrition in ministry and/or sector plans in Rwanda and Uganda, too.

Table 10: Integration of priority nutrition actions into annual work plans of relevant ministries/sectors

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E sector uptake (target >3)	CPI uptake (target 75%)
Bangladesh	40,000		NA	NA
Ghana	50,000	Work underway to integrate the core nutrition actions into the annual work plans of relevant ministries/sectors	NA	NA
Mali	Combined with 2.2	Work with individual ministries to integrate nutrition issues into their national strategies	4	47%
Mozambique	60,000	Seven ministries identified as linked to nutrition - agriculture, education and social protection identified as priority sectors. REACH was considered to have played an important role through its work in sensitizing and training planning and technical staff of sector ministries	7	76%
Nepal	40,000	When REACH started, the ministries had already included nutrition in their annual plans, as part of the MSNP; REACH/NNFSS provides annual support to relevant ministries to ensure sectoral plans cover nutrition and that there are annual multisectoral plans at district level.	6	94%
Rwanda	28,000	Support to: drafting of the MINAGRI Nutrition Action Plan, conducting its costing, and development of its operational and M&E plan; the MINEDUC School Health Policy; and the national protocol on nutritional management of diet-related non-communicable diseases.	5	48%
Tanzania	50,000		NA	NA
Uganda	50,000	Nutrition has been integrated in five sector plans	5	100%

    Activity considered a priority in this country. NA Not applicable

73.   **Integration of priority nutrition actions into relevant sub-national development plans.** This output was to be achieved through the drafting or adaptation of various tools, such as planning, budgeting, mapping and monitoring. The progress that REACH could make depended, again, on country circumstances. It provided effective facilitation for nutrition planning at district/provincial levels in Ghana, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda and Tanzania. But in Mali decentralised planning was only just starting (with the conflict constraining UN staff movement), and in Bangladesh there were no formal systems for development planning at sub-national level.

74.   Overall, across these country case studies, the work at decentralised levels was appreciated across stakeholder groups and reported to have influenced commitment as well as understanding of nutrition issues (in other words, there was a strong link with Outcome 1). REACH's tools were seen as important, including those for stakeholder mapping. The work at decentralised levels also certainly generated expectations of funding, in particular on the side of the country governments and other non-UN agencies. In some countries (Mozambique, Ghana, Rwanda and Nepal) modest amounts of additional funding were allocated through regular government budgeting channels, either from the central level or in local-level decision-making. In Tanzania REACH's pilot work in four districts was extended because WHO provided district-level funding.

Box 6: Support to sub-national planning in Tanzania

> In Tanzania REACH enabled TFNC to provide sectoral guidance and tools on planning and budgeting at district level and technical support to district and regional nutrition officers. REACH also helped organize annual planning and budgeting meetings at district level in eight zones. In 2015 REACH planned to support the zone-level planning and budgeting training.

Table 11: Integration of priority nutrition actions into relevant sub-national development plans

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E (target 50%)
Bangladesh	190,000	Formal systems for development planning at sub-national level do not exist. REACH did work to pilot multi-sectoral nutrition planning in Satkhira district in 2013 and 2014	NA
Ghana	55,000	In three regions advocacy for the adoption of nutrition interventions into district plans and programs. The National REACH Facilitator - placed in the northern region (in Tamale) - was able, together with colleagues from the UN and other agencies, to provide support to this process	NA
Mali	45,000	Work at the decentralized level just starting. To date only regional levels have been targeted through the communication strategy for the nutrition action plan. At the decentralised level there is still no coordinated planning, budgeting or programme	0%
Mozambique	169,000	A total of nine provincial plans were drafted, and five have been approved	No information
Nepal	190,000	REACH/NNFSS supported district level officials to ensure nutrition included as part of work plans. In 2014 technical support to the review and analysis of the 6 MSNP priority district plans, including their respective budgets, and to their alignment to the budget cycle; the government funded the plans. The extension to the next 12 districts was planned but had not yet commenced.	33%

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E (target 50%)
Rwanda	169,000	DPEMs were updated in 17 districts and 22 districts were trained on integrated planning (supported by REACH under UNICEF's initiative and leadership), and funds were mobilized for scaling up of nutrition in 25 districts (out of 30), two of which under a UN joint program with SDC funding	NA
Tanzania	220,000	REACH enabled TFNC to provide sectoral guidance and tools on planning and budgeting at district level and technical support to district and regional nutrition officers. REACH also helped organize annual planning and budgeting meetings at district level in eight zones	83%
Uganda	70,000	REACH supported the roll-out of UNAP orientation to the district level along with FAO, UNICEF and USAID which would have resulted in some sensitization at the district level Costed nutrition interventions in the district annual work plan 2014/2015 for two early riser districts	No information

Activity considered a priority in this country.

NA   *Not applicable*

Outcome 3 – Increased capacity at all levels

Outcome 3 was one of the more challenging areas of REACH's work.

Overall, the scope for progress depended on national institutional contexts. The complexities of capacity development processes, particularly when they extended from national to local government levels meant that, in three years, there were limits to what REACH could achieve. Along with other partners, REACH contributed to significant enhancements in institutional capacity, although progress is best described as incremental. And the complexities mean that, after three years, the sustainability of those enhancements cannot be guaranteed.

REACH's approach to capacity enhancement is not without dispute. There was no clear agreement among global stakeholders regarding whether REACH should focus purely on mobilizing partners to provide technical inputs or play a direct role in addressing capacity gaps. REACH's role with respect to supporting UN coordination was also contested by some global and country-level informants, and in particular the extent to which this should be paid for by donors.

75.   Once policies and plans are in place, the capacity to implement these interventions must be ensured. REACH, in coordination with other development partners, and based on its experience in the pilot countries, sought to work with governments to establish the multi-sectoral coordination structures that are required to increase coherence in existing programmes and optimise the use of resources. REACH's main areas of support under this outcome related to: the establishment and/or functionality of multi-sector nutrition coordination mechanisms (at national and/or district level as considered relevant and based on evolving needs); strengthening of institutional and human capacity for nutrition to support multi-sectoral coordination/facilitation for nutrition; and the development/ promotion of knowledge-sharing networks for exchange of good programming practices.

76.   This outcome was raised by many interviewees, internal and external, as being one of the more challenging areas of REACH's work and for the nutrition sector as a whole. It was clearly something that had been discussed at length in the early pilot countries. Following Mauritania and Lao PDR, REACH moved to a model of having a national facilitator as well as an international facilitator, and a key part of this was to build in a capacity development element.

77.   Some of those interviewed, particularly at global level, contested whether REACH as an initiative should be seeking to 'increase capacity' at national level or whether this aspect of their work should remain entirely with the UN agencies, which should shoulder the responsibility for this, rather than having REACH engage in it. These comments made the distinction between REACH having a catalytic role and a gap-identifying and gap-filling role, versus a direct role in addressing these gaps. It also underscored a lack of clarity on the role of REACH agencies within the overall nutrition approach, as it is assumed that REACH facilitates the identification of gaps and catalyses action, and that the UN partner agencies support the process of filling the gap. Another area that was highlighted strongly in the global-level interviews – in particular among the many external stakeholders who were consulted – was the extent to which REACH should be focusing on strengthening coordination of the UN including the extent to which external funders should pay for such coordination.

78.   REACH was not successful in promoting the establishment of new national structures where this was foreseen (Mozambique[17] and Rwanda) but did contribute to improving multisectoral/multi-stakeholder coordination (convening meetings, drawing up the agenda, moderating meetings and reporting) and played a strong role in mobilising additional stakeholders to participate, notably in Mozambique and Rwanda. It also played an important role in the establishment of decentralised (provincial) coordination mechanisms, notably in Ghana and in Mozambique. In terms of capacity building, the capacity gap assessment planned in five countries was successfully conducted in Ghana and Mozambique and its usefulness was recognised by the majority of stakeholders. In Mozambique, Ghana, and to some extent Tanzania, the work of REACH also contributed to capacity development at provincial level.

79.   **Establishment and/or functionality of multi-sector nutrition coordination mechanisms at national and/or district level**. This output, which was considered a REACH priority area in all eight countries, was to be achieved primarily through facilitation and technical backstopping.

Table 12: Establishment and/or functionality of multi-sector nutrition coordination mechanisms at national and district level

	Planned budget $ (including salaries)	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E	
			Capacity gap analysis	Capacity dev. planning
Bangladesh	860,000	Not much progress (with country context being a key factor): not successful in reviving the existing National Nutrition Council.	Yes	No
Ghana	825,000	Supported the operationalization of existing groups (drafting TOR for 6 technical WGs, organization of meetings, agendas and presentations). Also support to regional coordination through the regional CNDP structures.	Yes	No
Mali	835,000	Improved cooperation through the participatory planning and budgeting of the nutrition action plan facilitated by REACH. Various meetings between stakeholders organized but not clear that each is aware of each other's work or who is really responsible for taking action forward	Partially/ ongoing	Yes
Mozambique	865,000	Not substantially influenced existing key coordination structures at national. No success in	Yes	Yes

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[17] The Mozambique example highlights how important government commitment to high level structures is. At the beginning of the support period an overarching structure (CONOSAN) was being agreed upon, but ended up never being put in place due to lack of political commitment. At the time of this evaluation, and under the auspices of new Government, plans were being made to again create such a new overarching and multi-sectoral structure (IPSAN).

| | Planned budget $ (including salaries) | Evaluation Findings | REACH M&E | |
			Capacity gap analysis	Capacity dev. planning
		establishment of a new CONSAN (due to change in government composition), a major setback for the nutrition response. Strong role in: mobilizing additional stakeholders at national and provincial levels and setting up provincial coordination mechanisms under the PAMRDC		
Nepal	860,000	REACH facilitators successfully established and lead the NNFSS. Supported the establishment of 3 WGs: Advocacy and Communication, Capacity Development, M&E/MIS; the Academia Platform and the CSANN; and facilitated the High Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee and the National Nutrition and Food Security Coordination Committee meetings.	Yes	No
Rwanda	830,000	NTWG already in place. However REACH contributed to mobilizing additional ministries and other donors to sectors other than health such as the EU, SDC and EKN to participate in the NTWG (convening meetings, drawing the agenda, moderation of meetings and reporting. NTWG renamed Food and Nutrition Technical Working Group (F&NTWG) to reflect this broader participation of key sectors other than health.	Partially/ ongoing	No
Tanzania	833,000	Already a multi-sector coordination mechanism at national level. Technical support provided to TFNC to implement the recommendations of the Organizational Capacity Assessment analysis	Yes	Yes
Uganda	855,000	Already a multi-sector coordination unit in place. Proved difficult for the facilitators to engage with this coordination mechanism	Partially/ ongoing	No

Activity considered a priority in this country.

80.   The progress that REACH was able to make with this priority task depended on the national context. It could achieve little in Bangladesh, where no multi-sector nutrition coordination mechanism existed at national level and plans to create one remained stuck at high levels. In Ghana it could make a useful contribution to the work of cross-sectoral planning groups at national and sub-national levels.

81.   REACH had ambitious plans in Mozambique to facilitate the creation of a new national nutrition coordination structure to replace the existing one. This did not happen, although REACH did make useful, more modest contributions to enhancing collaboration and coordination at national and provincial levels. In Nepal, REACH was centrally engaged in the launch and early operation of the Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat, supported the operationalization of the two high level coordination committees, and provided support to the coordination structure overall to facilitate the coordination of MSNP activities. In Rwanda, it had little influence on the national coordination mechanism already in place, but informants applauded its role in improving multi-sectoral/multi-stakeholder coordination through this body. In Mali, REACH supported the design of the coordination mechanisms at national and sub-national level, by drafting TORs and conducting advocacy to get the mechanism implemented. Finding a multi-sector coordination mechanism already in place in Tanzania, REACH helped to strengthen it. In Uganda, too, there was already a multi-sector coordination unit in place when REACH arrived. But it was very difficult for the facilitators to engage with this coordination mechanism and to influence the trajectory of nutrition policy and implementation of the national nutrition action plan through it.

82.   Overall, except where structural constraints precluded progress, REACH was

thus able to support incremental improvements in the intensity of consultation, collaboration and coordination across and among nutrition stakeholders – either through existing coordination bodies, or through new ones that it helped to launch. It is too early to say whether such changes can be sustained; however, it is worth noting that this reflects considerable work by REACH facilitators, and that in some cases the work around nutrition coordination has resulted in government taking over selected REACH tools in some countries (e.g. Situation Analysis Dashboards, and Nutrition Analysis etc. in countries such as Mozambique, Bangladesh, Ghana).

83. **Strengthening of institutional and human capacity for nutrition in government**. This complementary effort to strengthen government capacity was initially seen as a priority in four of the REACH countries. It was an ambitious proposition for a three-year intervention. Once again, the results depended on national contexts. They depended also on the feasibility of going beyond the provision of training courses to a broader, deeper change in national and/or local government capacity. Overall, where circumstances permitted, REACH results were incremental, and after so short and relatively small-scale a facilitation process, their sustainability was not assured.

84. In Bangladesh, REACH was not able to contribute directly to this result. Particularly from 2014, it significantly reinforced the functional capacity of the SUN Focal Point, but this was through the provision of technical assistance (less intensively than government wished) rather than the facilitation of genuine capacity development. In Ghana, various REACH meetings and workshops at national and regional levels were instrumental in supporting capacity development. The multisectoral structures that were introduced under SUN and that REACH supported also had some capacity development effect. In Mali, while some capacity building was achieved at the central level through training to sensitise on the issue of malnutrition and the importance of a multisectoral approach, it cannot be said that capacity was substantially increased at any level and certainly not at all at the decentralised level – which could hardly be expected from such a short and small-scale REACH effort and in view of the security challenges.

85. There was more scope for REACH to help build capacity in Mozambique (Box 7). In Nepal, it developed a training manual (with standardised training materials) and ran training events at national and local levels. Additionally, a pool of trainers from public training institutions has been identified for capacity building and the development of National Human Resources Development plan has been initiated. REACH also supported the NNFSS and multi-sector, multi-stakeholder working groups in Nepal to provide regular, capacity development support, employing 'a learning by doing' approach. In Rwanda the capacity gap analysis foreseen in the CIP was not endorsed. Nevertheless, REACH supported a district-level planning assessment in 2014 in 30 districts, and consultations with ministries were in progress in 2015 to conduct a needs assessment. In Tanzania, with a limited budget, REACH's training work was more *ad hoc* in nature, although it did make an important contribution to institutional development for nutrition at Regional and district levels. The national context was less conducive in Uganda, although REACH was able to do some sensitisation work with district-level institutions.

Box 7: Capacity development in Mozambique

In Mozambique, informants considered that REACH made an important contribution to strengthening the Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN). It also worked with sector ministries to provide support to their respective planning processes so that nutrition priorities would be included in sector plans. As a result of this, sector plans of seven sector ministries included nutrition activities in 2014 – a significant achievement. The planning manual was developed for this purpose, and has also been used at provincial level to influence planning processes (see ¶71-73).

Table 13: Strengthening government institutional and human capacity

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E		
			Technical human capital national	Technical human capital sub-national	National: focal points in ministries (target >5)
Bangladesh	10,000	Not able to contribute directly to this result. Development of government capacity to engage in SUN could be seen as an important indirect contribution of REACH. At district level, in Satkhira, some training was undertaken on advocacy, coalition building. Training provided on Nutrition Analysis.	Not started	Partially implemented	2
Ghana	55,000	Nutrition governance capacity gap assessment undertaken in close collaboration with the Government, the UN network and REACH Secretariat (facilitated by consultants) considered very useful. Various REACH meetings and workshops at national and regional levels instrumental in supporting capacity development. Training on REACH tools in northern regions.	Partially implemented	Partially implemented	5
Mali	100,000	Whilst some capacity building has been achieved at the central level through training to sensitize on the issue of malnutrition and the importance of a multi-sectoral approach, it cannot be said that capacity has been substantially increased at any level and certainly not at all at the decentralized level	Partially implemented	Partially implemented	5
Mozambique	14,000	Capacity gap analysis (finalized in 2014) instrumental by demonstrating where the capacity priorities are. Institutional strengthening of SETSAN (not foreseen in CIP) by supporting internal organization, management, creating systems, streamlining processes, and working on priority setting:	Partially implemented	Partially implemented	8
Nepal	10,000	Training manual developed and master training of trainers and regional training of trainers conducted. Key stakeholders in the 6 MSNP priority districts trained on nutrition planning and budgeting, including mapping and monitoring tools and systems. Trainer 'pool' identified for capacity building; and development of a National Human Resources Development plan initiated.	Partially implemented	Partially implemented	6
Rwanda	69,000	NCC did not endorse the capacity gap analysis foreseen in the CIP. Nevertheless, REACH supported a district level DPEM assessment in 2014 in 30 districts, and consultations with ministries in progress in 2015 to conduct a needs assessment	Not started	Partially implemented	5
Tanzania	NA	No planned budget thus ad hoc support. REACH's capacity development clearest in the decentralisation of nutrition to district level: with TFNC and UNICEF, REACH helped review the job profile for the Regional and Council District Focal Points and together TOR for the Council Nutrition Management teams. Training to TFNC staff on REACH analytical tools and methods.	Partially implemented	Partially implemented	7
Uganda	115,000	REACH tried to support capacity within the OPM by creating positions financed by REACH for an M&E officer and a coordination officer, but these offers have met resistance and discussions are ongoing. Some sensitization at district level through REACH/other UN agencies support to the roll-out of UNAP	Partially implemented	Partially implemented	7

Activity considered a priority in this country.

86. **Knowledge-sharing network for exchange of good programming practices.** Proposed activities include *inter alia* the documentation of case studies highlighting good practices for scaling up nutrition actions, experience-sharing with other countries and creation of a REACH webpage (the latter was foreseen as a specific activity in Bangladesh and Nepal, whilst in Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda it was an 'if desired' activity). In Nepal, REACH/NNFSS developed a National Nutrition and Food Security Portal – a Government-owned site serving as an online platform for information sharing.

Table 14: Knowledge-sharing network for exchange of good programming practices

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings
Bangladesh	35,000	Unsuccessful REACH efforts to organize a high-level knowledge-sharing event. REACH facilitated a visit by a Nepal civil society alliance to the Bangladesh CSA for SUN.
Ghana	70,000	MoFA group study tour to Rwanda
Mali	450,000	Communication strategy developed and disseminated at the national and regional level for national nutrition action plan
Mozambique	50,000	SETSAN encouraged to use monthly meetings as a platform for knowledge sharing
Nepal	35,000	REACH developed the Nepal Nutrition and Food Security Portal" (a Government-owned platform for information sharing, online tools for stakeholder mapping and data visualisation and able to be used as a planning tool.
Rwanda	50,000	Learning exchange visit to Burundi and organization of a national nutrition conference where other REACH countries were invited to share their work/experience. Rwanda REACH invited and sponsored Niger team to attend the 3rd National Food and Nutrition Summit and share experiences. Rwanda's second nutrition summit held in 2014.
Tanzania	60,000	Bangladesh consultant co-facilitated advocacy workshop organized by the SUN CSO network
		Recommendations of the capacity and needs assessment of the IT infrastructure of TFNC could be utilized to prepare donors' support proposal to strengthen TFNC capacity
		TFNC librarians trained on document management
Uganda	50,000	Case Study on scaling up nutrition in Uganda completed and disseminated for lessons learned and sharing of best practice.

No REACH M&E data – not captured in logframe indicators

87. In most countries, this was a comparatively straightforward area of activity for REACH. Exchange visits were arranged, and generally found useful, between Nepal and Bangladesh, Rwanda and Burundi, Niger and Rwanda, and Ghana and Rwanda. In Mali, a communication strategy was developed and disseminated at the national and regional level for the national nutrition action plan. A REACH Bangladesh consultant co-facilitated an advocacy workshop organized by the SUN CSO network in Tanzania. But in Bangladesh, REACH efforts to organize a high-level knowledge-sharing event, with international participation, were unsuccessful (with security risks and political unrest playing a part). Plans for an exchange between the Government of Tajikistan and the NPC in Nepal were cancelled following the Nepal earthquake in April 2015. In addition to these country level activities, REACH also supported government representatives to participate in international knowledge sharing events e.g. SUN annual gathering, ICN, regional meetings, CAADP, etc.

Outcome 4 – Increasing effectiveness and accountability

Outcome 4 has seen limited progress and has also been an area where results have been more difficult to achieve. As in other outcome areas, progress was dependent on country context. Work has been done in developing multi-sector monitoring systems, and in some countries, partial nationally led systems are now in place. Whilst Nepal has made notable progress in developing its MSNP M&E system, it is not yet fully functional. REACH's achievements in breaking down barriers among UN agencies were also limited. Good technical relationships were built, but there was little joint programming other than that occurring through One UN). Country-level stakeholders had differing opinions as to whether REACH should or could have a coordinating function among UN agencies. Progress in this area was strongly affected by the willingness of the UN agencies at country level to collaborate.

REACH's limited performance in this area highlights the flawed assumption that relatively short-term facilitators at the country level could influence long-standing institutional incentives and political economy factors. This was unrealistic. The levels of progress towards this outcome were uneven and depended on the local institutional factors and personalities of country heads of UN agencies.

88. Outcome 4 is the second area where progress was a challenge for REACH across most of the countries. The creation of accountability matrices for food and nutrition security was planned in Tanzania and Bangladesh, and partially facilitated through a mapping exercise (now called stakeholder and nutrition action matrix) but not formally established. The creation of multi-sectoral nutrition monitoring systems was a priority area in all eight countries, matched by budget allocation. In Bangladesh, little formal progress was made, in Ghana and Tanzania the frameworks were under development but not yet in operation. In Mali and Mozambique, frameworks or systems were set up. Nepal made strong progress: having endorsed the Multi-sector Nutrition Plan (MSNP) M&E framework in early 2014, it was finalising guidelines and training.

89. **Multi-sectoral responsibilities and accountability matrix for food and nutrition security at national and district levels.** This output was not designated a REACH priority area in any of the countries.

Table 15: Multi-sectoral responsibilities and accountability matrix for food and nutrition security at national and district levels

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E		
			Dash-board	Governance in NIS	Nutrition in NIS
Bangladesh	10,000		Incomplete	No	No
Ghana	10,000	No coverage dashboard – only a situation analysis dashboard. MQ-SUN is supporting NDPC to develop a national expenditure tracking system - REACH providing support to national consultant and working group	Incomplete	No	No
Mali	0		Incomplete	No	No
Mozambique	10,000	REACH helped SETSAN in creating an implementation tracking mechanism (including coverage dashboard) to monitor the progress on the implementation of the PAMRDC	Completed (<12 months old), adopted by government	No	No
Nepal	10,000	NPC and DDC have comprehensive accountability matrix for nutrition actions and use this to hold the national and district level Ministries accountable	Completed and current (<12 months old)	Yes	Yes

| | Planned budget $ | Evaluation Findings | REACH M&E | | Nutrition in NIS |
			Dash-board	Governance in NIS	
		to fully incorporate nutrition sensitive and specific actions into their respective work plans with adequate budget allocation			
Rwanda	10,000	Rapid SMS was expanded with nutrition indicators in all districts since 2013. Ongoing support to the establishment of a web-based national and district nutrition indicator dashboard. Dev-Info monitoring tool installed and operationalised in 18 districts. Ongoing coaching to these districts. Ongoing support to the establishment of the National M&E system to track the implementation of the NFNSP 2013-2018. Knowledge generation through an operational research by analysing the nutrition data.	Incomplete	No	No
Tanzania	15,000	In 2013: Financial tracking – Public Expenditure Review (PER) of nutrition expenditures supported by government and UNICEF undertaken	Completed and current (<12 months old)	No	No
Uganda	0	Implementation tracking database established at the UNAP Secretariat, coverage dashboard updated regularly	Incomplete	No	No

Activity considered a priority in this country.
NIS is National Information System.

90.   In Tanzania budget was allocated to devise a comprehensive UNICEF, REACH and ALMA-produced accountability matrix for nutrition and a nutrition scorecard through joint work. No progress was made on the M&E element of the accountability matrix. In Bangladesh, REACH planned to work with Government and SUN to develop a common results framework for nutrition (a specified SUN intention), as a contribution to this output. However, this was contingent on approval of the national nutrition policy and consequent national action plan. As the policy and the plan were not approved, there was no progress on the common results framework.

91.   **Establishment of multi-sectorial nutrition monitoring system and linkages to accountability.** This output, on the other hand, was a REACH priority area in all eight countries. The progress made on it depended, as ever, on country context and, specifically, on whether the rest of the required institutional framework was in place for a monitoring system to function. This was not the case in Bangladesh, where nutrition programming and related monitoring remained split between the food security-focused National Food Policy Plan of Action and Country Investment Plan under the Ministry of Food, and the Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Development Programme (HPNSDP) co-ordinated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. In Mali the M&E framework was developed in 2013 but implementation will depend on the coordination mechanism, namely the creation of a 'Cellule de Coordination' which is in the process of being established with support from REACH. In Ghana, REACH was able to support development of an M&E framework, although no national nutrition information system existed.

Box 8: REACH progress with monitoring in Nepal

REACH supported preparation of TOR for the multisectoral M&E/Management Information System Working Group and facilitated its meetings. In the second half of 2013, a consultant was recruited with UNICEF and Washington University support. Intensive consultations with M&E and information managers, planning officers and MSNP focal points of all ministries were undertaken with the participation of the M&E Department of the National Planning Commission. The M&E framework of the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan was endorsed in the first half of 2014. The fact that the consultant was positioned in the National Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat (NNFSS) was crucial to this success. Guidelines and training materials were also developed in the course of 2014 and are to be finalised in 2015. A final revision was in process in 2015. Discussions on the rollout by different sectors and at district level and ensuring its harmonisation with ongoing processes (avoiding duplication/ overload) were ongoing in 2015.

92.   In Mozambique, REACH helped SETSAN in creating an implementation-tracking mechanism to monitor the progress on the implementation of the Multi-sectoral Action Plan for the Reduction of Chronic Undernutrition, but this was not yet fully functioning at the time of the evaluation. As Box 8 (above) shows, REACH made strong progress in this area in Nepal. In Rwanda the focus on this output started only in November 2014 with the recruitment of an international consultant on M&E who was based in UNICEF but working closely with the MOH on on-the-job capacity building; a national DevInfo expert has also been hired under the One UN initiative to build district capacity. Activities were fragmented in Tanzania, with a Financial Tracking Public Expenditure Review of nutrition expenditures in 2013 and a workshop in 2015 to develop the nutrition scorecard for accountability and action to be linked to an accountability matrix that will be developed in 2015/2016. UNICEF in Uganda implemented M&E development activities without notifying REACH, which had also begun to plan the same work. However, REACH supported the 'bringing together' of the UN to support/fund the facilitator post and the national M&E post within the OPM.

93.   **Compliance with government and REACH UN partner Agencies' nutrition commitments, including budgetary allocations.** This output was not a REACH priority area in any of the eight countries, and budget was only allocated to it in Tanzania and Uganda.

94.   Few specific achievements were recorded, although in Nepal resource mobilisation for all six MSNP priority districts was accomplished. The plan to hire a consultant to work with the Ministry of Finance was included in Bangladesh, but not fulfilled.

95.   **Establishment of nutrition as a key area for the UN Delivering as One**. In terms of establishing nutrition as a key area for the UN Delivering as One, REACH's achievements in breaking down agency barriers was limited. Good relationships were built between the agencies at technical level in some countries (e.g. Ghana, initially in Tanzania, Mozambique). But this only resulted in very limited joint programming additional to that already occurring under One UN (Ghana, Tanzania, Mozambique). In Rwanda REACH played a key role in preparing a proposal for a One UN joint nutrition project. There were differing opinions among stakeholders at country level as to whether REACH should or could have a UN coordination function. Some felt that in One UN countries this role was obsolete. Success or otherwise in this area was strongly affected by the willingness of the UN agencies at country level to

collaborate. This output was not a REACH priority area in any of the eight countries, and budget was only allocated to it in Rwanda. However, particularly after the recent decisions to have REACH serve as the focal point of the UN Network for SUN, its performance in this area was highly significant.

Table 16: Establishment of nutrition as a key area for the UN Delivering as One

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E			
			UN as One	UN In-country focal points	Governance in NIS	Nutrition in NIS
Bangladesh	0	Delivering As One not formally launched, and REACH's achievements in breaking down barriers limited. Joint programmes (though REACH not centrally involved): FAO/UNICEF/WFP MDG-F programme (2010-2013); FAO/UNICEF in the southern districts; and more proposed in the Chittagong Hill tracts. REACH's biggest achievement with regard to inter-agency convergence was the agreement and publication of the Common Narrative on Undernutrition (see Outcome 1)	1 joint UN prog. developed and funded	4	Mechanism created and fully operational	No
Ghana	0	All UN nutrition focal points have REACH outputs as part of their work plan. However, UN coordination remains a weak area. Whilst there has been some joint programming between some of the UN agencies (particularly in the northern regions) and some co-funding of activities, the agencies have not substantially adjusted their programming and no joint program has been launched, and as yet there is no joint UN nutrition strategy.	No joint UN prog. developed and funded	4	Mechanism created and fully operational	No
Mali	0	UN cooperation remains a weak area although REACH does coordinate a UN nutrition working group along with the SUN Focal Point which meets once a month. Bilateral MoUs between UN agencies for nutrition (e.g. WFP and UNICEF for joint evaluations; WFP and FAO perform activities aimed at preventing malnutrition).	2 or more joint UN progs. developed and funded	4	Mechanism created and fully operational	No
Mozambique	0	Until very recently UN programming not part of the approach as where REACH deliberately focused on country governance and government structures. Joint programming has taken place under the UNDAF. The drafting of a joint UN nutrition strategy (the relevance of which was questioned initially by some given the existence of a national nutrition strategy and the UNDAF), planned for 2014 has been moved to 2015 to align with the UNDAF preparation process. In early 2015, a UN inventory was completed on nutrition actions.	2 or more joint UN prog. developed and funded	2	Mechanism created and fully operational	No
Nepal	0	Nutrition Focal Points contributed to REACH activities through their participation in the 3 WGs and technical inputs into various documents facilitated by REACH. No joint programme launched and no joint UN nutrition strategy. The positioning of the REACH facilitators in a government structure and their having been given the prime responsibility for implementing NNFSS priority activities and fulfilling NNFSS objectives was a key factor.	No joint UN prog. developed and funded	2	Mechanism created and fully operational	No
Rwanda	10,000	In Rwanda the REACH facilitators played a key role in preparing a proposal for a One UN Joint Nutrition Project funded by SDC (USD 4,895,000): they acted as a "secretariat" for the proposal write-up and its finalization. This SDC-funded One UN joint nutrition project is jointly led by the four UN REACH agencies and is implemented in two districts: Nyamagabe and Rutsiro. Five-year nutrition programme (2014-2018) developed/approved by REACH SC.	2 or more joint UN progs. developed and funded	4	Mechanism created and fully operational	Yes
Tanzania	NA	REACH has struggled to be effective in its coordination of the four UN agencies and has not been given a mandate to speak on behalf of the agencies. Change of personnel in all of the four agencies at focal point level but also at head of agency level seems to have undermined the close coordination REACH enjoyed initially and there is now a lack of buy-in by the agencies to the REACH work plan.	No joint UN prog. developed and funded	4	Mechanism created and fully operational	No

	Planned budget $	Evaluation Findings	REACH M&E			
			UN as One	UN In-country focal points	Governance in NIS	Nutrition in NIS
Uganda	NA	UN SCN inventory completed in February 2014 and updated end 2014. A UN Nutrition Strategy completed and approved by the UN REACH Country Committee, and a UN/Government of Uganda flagship project finalized and funded for implementation in 2015-16	2 or more joint UN progs. developed and funded	4	No mechan-ism in place	Yes

NA   Not applicable

Box 9: UN collaboration in Ghana

In Ghana, REACH staff built good working relationships with UN staff. All nutrition focal points of the four UN agencies had REACH outputs as part of their work plan. However, UN coordination remained a weak area. While there was some joint programming between some of the UN agencies (particularly in the northern regions) and some co-funding of activities, the agencies did not substantially adjust their programming, no joint programme was launched, and as yet there is no joint UN nutrition strategy. Both at senior government level and within the UN agencies, challenges in accountability and lack of incentives for making progress on nutrition remained a constraint.

96.   As noted in the summary above, REACH's performance against this output exemplified a fundamental weakness in its theory of change: the assumption that global agreement between the heads of UN agencies to collaborate would – without specific mechanisms for enforcement and accountability – bring about changes in long-standing barriers between agencies, through the support by REACH-appointed facilitators

97.   Delivering As One has not formally been launched in Bangladesh, and REACH's achievements in breaking down barriers were limited. Some joint programming was achieved, and more is proposed. REACH was not centrally involved in these various collaborations, but was credited by informants with some strengthening of inter-agency communication on nutrition – constrained in turn by strong turf and personality issues in some of the agencies. Its biggest achievement with regard to inter-agency convergence was the agreement and publication of the Common Narrative on Undernutrition (see Outcome 1). There were similar challenges in Ghana (Box 9 above). In Mali, UN cooperation remained a weak area although REACH did coordinate a UN nutrition working group along with the SUN Focal Point that met once a month, and there are efforts to cooperate around the national multi-sector action plan for nutrition.

98.   In Mozambique, the drafting of a joint UN nutrition strategy (the relevance of which was questioned by some given the existence of a national nutrition strategy and the UNDAF) was planned for 2014 but moved to 2015 to align with the UNDAF preparation process.[18] Until very recently UN programming was not part of the approach in Mozambique, where REACH was deliberately focused on country governance and government structures. In Nepal there was some joint programming between some of the UN agencies and some co-funding of activities. But no joint programme was launched and there was no joint UN nutrition strategy.

99.   There was more substantial progress in Rwanda, where REACH facilitators

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[18] The evaluation coincided with work in Mozambique around the transition of REACH. This consultative process has since resulted in a keen interest in developing the UN Nutrition Strategy which has been receiving support by REACH.

played a key role in preparing a proposal for a One UN Joint Nutrition Project funded by SDC, jointly led by the four UN REACH agencies and implemented in two districts. Similarly, in Uganda a UN Nutrition Strategy was completed and approved by the UN REACH Country Committee, and an UN/Government of Uganda flagship project was finalised and funded for implementation in 2015–16. But in Tanzania, interviewees varied in their opinions as to whether REACH should or could have a coordination function for the UN. A number of people felt that, to coordinate the UN agencies effectively, the facilitator would need to be more senior and/or should be based with the Resident Coordinator, a point that was also raised in other case study countries (e.g. Ghana and Mozambique). Others felt that in a One UN country this role was obsolete as the UN were already coordinating under UNDAP.

2 b) Performance at country level – equity and gender

> REACH's tools and analytical work highlighted equity and gender issues. However, across all countries and stakeholder groups, REACH was not strongly associated with having specifically advocated for equity and gender or with having progressed on the agenda in this area.

100. REACH was designed to align with and contribute towards equity (including gender equity) as a key aspect of the mandates of the four UN agencies. Therefore, each CIP had a section on gender. While REACH tools brought out issues related to gender and equity, the support provided by REACH in most countries did not result in translating this into specific actions and activities that related to gender (Ghana, Tanzania).

To what extent has REACH contributed to an enhanced understanding of and approach to equity and gender equity in nutrition?

101. In all countries, REACH sought to collect and use gender-disaggregated data. The analytical work carried out at country level using various REACH tools for the mapping and dashboards had a clear angle of equity and gender equity. Indeed, one of the outcomes of the situational analysis was often to highlight interesting, and in some cases unexpected, correlations between stunting and equity.

102. In a majority of the countries (Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda), while the role of REACH tools in highlighting gender and equity was acknowledged, stakeholders did not notice any particular contribution by REACH on ensuring that this translated into a stronger focus on equity or gender equity in nutrition. In some of the countries where REACH worked, gender was controversial in the nutrition context (Bangladesh (Box 10), Mali, Uganda).

Box 10: A video in Bangladesh

> Through REACH Bangladesh's advocacy and communications work, which included media training, REACH built awareness of gender and equity issues in nutrition and strengthened opportunities for citizens to explore and address the issue. The main impact made on gender issues in nutrition came through a participatory video that REACH sponsored in Satkhira district. The video raised significant gender issues. Many stakeholders welcomed it as an accurate depiction of continuing social challenges, one of which is gender. Others, particularly in government, saw it as a false and negative depiction of Bangladesh as a backward society, and were offended when it was shown at the SUN Global Gathering in 2014.

103.   In Nepal – where interviewees confirmed that gender and equity (particularly the caste system) are key issues with particular impact on nutrition – REACH aligned itself with the approach of the MSNP. This included 'rights-oriented inclusiveness and gender equity' among its key principles, and activities to reduce women's workload under one of its outputs.

To what extent have REACH outputs and outcomes addressed equity considerations (including gender equality)?

104.   While all of the CIP documents contained a section discussing gender as a cross-cutting issue, REACH's work was considered to be aligned with UNDAFs/UNDPs (as appropriate), where they existed (Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania), that included gender and equity as cross-cutting issues. However, despite good intentions, across a number of countries REACH did not include gender at output or activity level (Bangladesh, Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania); in these cases it seemed to get lost in the context of wide-reaching and ambitious plans. Gender and equity were also not included at the level of the annual work plans (Bangladesh, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana), although in Rwanda attention was given to gender at activity planning level and in the integrated planning exercise. REACH facilitators acknowledged that although gender and equity were part of the way they talked about nutrition, they had not specifically pushed to raise awareness on gender and equity issues. Some facilitators felt that gender and equity were not considered to be a key part of the design or implementation of REACH at country level. The lack of progress in this respect partially reflects the fact that the selection of the core nutrition actions is a participatory process and that if stakeholders did not feel that a gender action was a core nutrition action for the country it would not be mapped.

Box 11: Comments on REACH, gender and equity: some global-level interviewees

"Not enough on gender is not a problem of just REACH. It is a general problem... It is a limitation in terms of understanding the problem but also of political will [in the countries]."
"Need for realism about what is realistic – you can have these issues embedded in what you are doing when you meet with government."
"With respect to equity would say that yes REACH has contributed. The more in-depth analysis which REACH did in countries."

2 c) Performance at country level – efficiency

Efficiency was assessed by asking for stakeholder views on the value of REACH and examining expenditure against planned budgets. A comparison with SUN was not possible due to overlap between SUN and REACH countries. Across REACH countries results were achieved with lower budgets than planned, allowing time-lines to be extended appropriately, beyond the overly ambitious ones factored into REACH's original design. There was some loss in programming efficiency because of delays in the placement of REACH facilitators in all countries. The lag time (up to a year) between the explanatory missions during which the CIP was written and the arrival of the first REACH facilitator led to preliminary work being out of date.

The REACH 'model' was generally perceived as expensive by global-level interviewees. The inverse view prevailed in REACH countries. In both cases, there was no specific cost analysis to back up these perceptions. Given REACH's supportive role vis-à-vis SUN, comparisons with the latter (which were part of the TOR) are not considered relevant.

The findings from the country level highlight the predominant view that REACH inputs need to have sufficient 'weight', consistency, and continuity. This would challenge the current idea of having a 'REACH light' approach in countries as is now being envisioned for the next phase of REACH and its expansion to support all 55 SUN countries.

At country level, REACH's flexibility allowed it to be agile and opportunistic; and in various countries 'cost-savings' were often realized when funds allocated by organizations outside the UN allowed REACH to extend the contracts of facilitators in all countries. The eight country case studies revealed significant underspending in all countries, partly because other donors or agencies funded activities that REACH had planned (as in Ghana, Mozambique, Uganda and Tanzania).

105.   At country level, REACH staff were able to be agile and opportunistic as a result of the flexibility they had in their budgets and work plans. At this level, contrary to some global-level perceptions, interviewees did not consider the REACH model resource-intensive and expensive. Conflicting perceptions of efficiency created pressure at global level to reduce the costs of REACH and work in more countries; while at country level there were calls to prioritise. All countries underspent significantly on their allocated budget. Frequent revisions to procedures and processes were noted and were the result of efforts for ensuring that tools and in some cases procedures were piloted first and of efforts to keep pace with the rapidly evolving nutrition landscape (e.g. SUN, tools and developments of other actors, evolving role in the UN Network). While there were improvements in the efficiency of the Secretariat, country staff were frustrated by frequent revisions to procedures and processes.

How efficient has REACH been in terms of inputs compared to its outputs? How efficient and cost effective are its administrative and management structures (particularly compared to those of SUN)?

106.   When REACH first started piloting its approach in Mauritania and Lao PDR, WFP and BCG shared the costs of the facilitators. The facilitators had no budget to spend in country but instead worked closely with the four UN partners and when budget was required it was found at country level by the agencies. As REACH developed its tools and methodologies, the model became more dependent on external

inputs (often in the form of consultants) and therefore budget was allocated[19] and the facilitator was in some respects managing what appeared to other actors as a small project. In some contexts this budget, although small, was equal to that of agencies like OCHA (interviewee). The allocation of in-country budget to REACH changed dynamics; REACH had its own money and therefore the need for the agencies to own and contribute to it in order to succeed was reduced (interviewees). The level of ownership and joint working between the agencies that was seen in the pilots (Mauritania, Lao PDR and Sierra Leone) changed, and with this a degree of efficiency and / or value for money was lost, although in some cases it had the advantage of allowing for quicker action.

107. The budget allocated for each of the eight generation one countries funded by DFATD was USD 1,475,000 per country for a three-year period (REACH, 2014d). Of this, an equal proportion from each country (USD 50,000 per year for three years) was allocated for "technical support" of the REACH Secretariat (ibid). The country budget included the costs of the facilitators, which represented the bulk of the countries.[20] Funds were managed and held by WFP at global level, and at country level. WFP hosted the facilitators in all countries except Rwanda where UNICEF took on this responsibility. WFP carried out the financial management and provided records to the Secretariat. The usual UN management fee (7%) was applied at HQ level on the funds.

108. In the CIPs, a financial annex included the planned spending of the budget against the four REACH outcomes. This enabled country-specific prioritisation. Nevertheless, in early correspondence with DFATD, REACH noted that they were "hesitant to become too prescriptive" because that could undermine the facilitation process. REACH is not trying to implement a series of defined activities but to facilitate a concerted effort by government and partners to establish stronger coherence, management and accountability in the process of scaling up nutrition in country (REACH, 2011: 28). Right from the start there was therefore an understanding that funds were provisionally allocated to outcomes and activities in the CIP but that, during the development of the work plan at country level by government and the REACH-UN agencies, changes might be made (ibid).

109. The eight-country case studies show that there was significant underspending in all countries. In some cases, this occurred because other donors or agencies fully or partially funded activities that REACH had planned (Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda). Whilst REACH planned and budgeted for two years of an international facilitator and three years of a national facilitator in the majority of countries, in all countries except Mozambique the international facilitator stayed longer. Savings in the overall budget (and on facilitator costs in Mali and Uganda where a consultant was hired at the start of REACH) allowed REACH to extend the contracts of facilitators in some countries (Bangladesh, Ghana, Mozambique, Nepal, Tanzania).

110. Particularly at global level, a number of stakeholders perceived REACH to be 'expensive' and described the model as 'intensive in terms of money and human input'

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[19] This is not the case in second generation countries Burundi and Chad, where REACH staff are funded at country level and have no budget.

20 These were based on UN standard pay rates for a mid-level P4 Programme Officer for the international facilitator: for Year 1 = $226,140; Year 2 = $238,500; Year 3 = $252,420 averaging to $239,020. For the national facilitator an estimate based on mid-level salary levels in two African and two Asian countries was used, USD 50,000 annually (REACH Tanzania, 2011: 33 – Tanzania CIP Package).

(global interviews). This perception was not necessarily linked to hard evidence[21] but was still, in the opinion of the evaluation team, important, as some of the interviewees influence or make key decisions. The perception largely linked to a need to roll REACH out more widely to a greater number of countries, notably the 55 (at last count) SUN countries. Therefore, REACH was called upon to develop the idea of 'REACH light',[22] an idea that was dismissed by some as being short-sighted: "one person to turn around nutrition in a country – is that much?" (interview). Remote working was an idea that at country and global level was considered less likely to do "anything really meaningful" (interview). The evaluation team found that the facilitators were critical to the achievements of REACH, and that having these staff in country was a very important aspect.

111.   Many stakeholders at country level (internal and external) said they would invest in REACH as it provided good value for money. While at global level the comparison with SUN was made, at country level stakeholders saw REACH as being present at country level in a way that SUN was not, and saw the two initiatives as being complementary but different. Comparisons on their relative efficiencies are therefore of limited use, particularly when – as shown by the case studies (section 4.1 above) – REACH was often implementing and ensuring the progress of SUN at country level.

112.   In many of the countries where REACH was working, it is not easy to make progress on any development intervention efficiently. Bangladesh was described as an 'intense' country which suffered political instability during the period under review; in Mali, REACH and other actors were affected by the security situation. Traffic was another impediment to efficiency as journeys between offices could take hours in Bangladesh, Ghana and Tanzania. REACH was also working with governments and across government ministries to encourage and facilitate a multisectoral response to nutrition. This work was slow, careful, and effective, but rarely efficient (interviews). REACH used interns to try to increase its efficiency (Bangladesh, Ghana, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda) with varying degrees of success.[23]

Table 17: REACH expenditure in First Generation countries, 2011-2014

CO	Total available per CO	2012 CO Staff Int'l Facilitator	*Country Actual Expen. 2011- 2012	2013 CO Staff Int'l Facilitato	*Country Actual Expen. 2013	2014 CO Staff Int'l Facilitator	*Country Actual Expen. 2014	2015 CO Staff Int'l Facilitator	*Country & Actual and Committed as of 07.07.2015	Available Balance
BD	1,475,000	208,510	66,586	238,500	102,059	252,420	242,077	123,270	68,858	172,719
GH	1,475,000	86,322	113,255	238,500	97,927	195,865	237,965	59,362	164,083	281,721
ML	1,475,000	27,711	63,855	206,558	182,722	252,420	267,634	33,018	151,539	289,541
MZ	1,475,000	103,951	83,371	238,500	273,417	136,388	205,986	0	139,548	293,839
NP	1,475,000	37,690	84,255	238,500	153,505	252,420	258,471	164,360	166,186	119,613
RW	1,475,000	131,915	67,662	238,500	159,672	147,506	392,273	0	70,311	267,162

[21] And in some respects the finding, in the opinion of the evaluation team, also contradicts the findings from the SUN Evaluation which highlight that the nutrition response was more effective in those SUN countries that have seen support from REACH.
[22] The REACH light approach would take into account that REACH comes on top of an already functioning system in country which allows for a lighter type of intervention without necessarily having a full REACH package with local facilitators but rather remote support and technical assistance.
[23] The use of the interns was part of a partnership with Columbia University, and involved the selection of well qualified graduate students who were closely supervised by facilitators and the REACH Secretariat.

CO	Total available per CO	2012 CO Staff Int'l Facilitator	*Country Actual Expen. 2011- 2012	2013 CO Staff Int'l Facilitato	*Country Actual Expen. 2013	2014 CO Staff Int'l Facilitator	*Country Actual Expen. 2014	2015 CO Staff Int'l Facilitator	*Country & Actual and Committed as of 07.07.2015	Available Balance
TZ	1,475,000	100,912	87,623	238,500	101,118	246,313	191,136	0	83,778	425,620
UG	1,475,000	41,025	235,192	99,375	171,251	252,420	219,486	143,815	77,306	235,130
Tot	11,800,000	738,036	801,799	1,736,933	1,241,671	1,735,752	2,015,028	523,825	921,609	2,085,345

113.   It is possible, of course, to work efficiently but to little long-term purpose. For example, the quality of tools produced by REACH was high and the amount of time that was put into exercises such as the stakeholder mapping was significant. While the quality and effort put into such tools undoubtedly had a positive effect on the results, there was an acknowledgement at country level that exercises like the mapping are "out of date as soon as they are finished". This has been acknowledged by REACH and concerted efforts were subsequently made to make the refined REACH mapping tool (SUN-PMT) more user friendly/automated and to make it conducive to successive monitoring. In some countries, even though tools are developed with Government, the tools were considered too ambitious and complex to be effectively nationally owned (Ghana, Tanzania).

114.   Efficiency in terms of programming was also lost because of the delayed start of REACH in most countries. In all countries there was a significant lag time (up to a year) between the exploratory mission during which the CIP was written and the arrival of the first REACH facilitator; as a result, preliminary work was often out of date and those who had been involved in agreeing the CIP had sometimes moved on (Bangladesh, Ghana, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania). Staff changes at country level also undermined efficiency in some contexts (Uganda). An overview of the lag time between CIP visit and facilitator deployment is presented at Annex L.

Efficiency of administrative structures that REACH put in place

115.   WFP did the administration of the funds, as mentioned above, and this was reported to have been well done. The combination of a national and international facilitator was considered by most of those interviewed to work well in principle (it did not work in all countries because of issues with recruitment and continuity). However, some concerns were raised at country level about the sustainability of a national facilitator paid a UN salary if the aim was that eventually government would absorb the post. It is worth noting in this context that the transition in Uganda is proposing to create a national coordinator post that will take on most of REACH-government related coordination/facilitation work. This government staff function will be paid by UN for an initial period at government staff rate and will be taken over by the government later. Nonetheless, this points to the important question of whether, or to what extent, REACH's role is helping governments only with short-term facilitation or also with longer-term coordination.

116.   However, facilitators felt that they were not given sufficient support by the REACH Secretariat when starting out at country level. There was no clear process for supporting staff in start-up or for ensuring that they were properly introduced and accompanied during the early part of their time in country, reportedly because the REACH Secretariat was severely understaffed to support an expansion from 3 to 10 countries and the guidance materials were lacking. Early introductions are often key

to the legitimacy of a new initiative and, when done well, can improve efficiency. As a result, in some countries (e.g. Ghana) there were early teething problems concerning where the facilitators should be located (with tensions among UN agencies concerning who should host and why). The lack of formal introductions also led to confusion on the part of government, especially as in most cases the approval of the CIP had taken place a year early. In some countries a lack of legitimacy (or MOUs) undermined the efficiency; for example, in Tanzania the original idea had been that the facilitator would sit in the TFNC, but due to lack of official approvals at senior level this was not possible.

117.   In most cases (Ghana, Nepal, Tanzania) the REACH facilitators were based inside UN agencies (mostly WFP); this was recognised by those facilitators to provide them with efficiencies in terms of administrative, HR, financial and logistical support, security advice and cover (important in Mali) and well-equipped office space. In Mozambique the facilitators were based in SETSAN. This was seen to have been a very good option; it enhanced the buy-in by Government and further promoted REACH's neutrality. The same was found to be true in Nepal where the facilitators were based in NNFSS (within the NCP).

118.   From the perspective of some of the facilitators in country, the global administration of REACH was not as efficient as it might have been. They were frustrated by the frequent revisions to procedures, notably M&E requirements. Particularly in the early years of REACH and at the start of the first generation countries, there was agreement at country and global level that things were still evolving and gaps were being filled as the need occurred. But it was noted that the current leadership had introduced improvements and a degree of system and order that had previously been lacking.

119.   The annual planning and flexibility of budgets and programming was important for REACH and enabled it to identify opportunities and fill gaps at country level. This was seen as an efficient use of funding at country level, where often, with a small amount of funding for a meeting or workshop, REACH would be able to unblock bottlenecks. REACH's flexibility certainly contributed to its effectiveness but also to its efficiency, because when another donor or partner offered to fund a REACH activity, REACH could realign and move its money to another priority.

2.3 What contributory/ explanatory factors have affected REACH's performance and results? (Evaluation Question 3)

120.   This section examines factors that explain or have contributed towards the performance of REACH and the results it has attained. Table 18 and table 19 summarise these factors across the country case studies and draw out positive and negative contributory/explanatory factors that were found to have influenced REACH's performance in the eight countries. The sections below draw out some of the major factors that emerged from the country case studies and from global interviews.

Operational and policy environments, capacity and resources, skills and knowledge in the participating countries

> The strongest external influencing factors for country progress on nutrition are without doubt the starting point of the country and the degree of high-level political commitment by the Government. Government staff turnover also played a role, as did the time taken to build institutional capacity. Being based in a Government institution was a facilitating factor. The personality and experience of the facilitators appointed and the grade they were given in the UN (P4) influenced their impact.

121. Governments' commitment to scaling up nutrition prior to REACH engagement (such as in Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Tanzania); government buy-in to REACH (e.g. Nepal); and facilitators' experience/knowledge of the country's context were considered key enabling factors. Table 18 highlights how these factors where they occurred tended to have a fairly significant impact on REACH. Another important factor was the hosting arrangements for the facilitators – WFP (Bangladesh, Ghana, Mali, Tanzania and Uganda[24]), UNICEF (Rwanda), ERSG (Sierra Leone) or a national structure (Nepal, and Mozambique; and planned for Tanzania) – have affected performance in different ways. Alignment with a particular UN agency was seen to be problematic largely by other UN agencies (loss of neutrality). Being based in a government structure facilitated REACH's support to national stakeholders in terms of facilitation, coordination, and capacity building. A number of different interviewees suggested that hosting by the UN Resident Coordinator (as was the case in the pilot countries) would ensure neutrality and more effective UN coordination.

122. Government staff turnover, was noted by four of the country case studies (Bangladesh, Ghana, Mozambique and Nepal), as hampering progress when new appointees chose not to prioritise nutrition or had no prior background and experience with nutrition issues (e.g. in Nepal). Depending on country context, the grade of the facilitators (P4) limited their authority within the UN and with senior government officials and decision-makers and UN staff turnover was also an issue in some countries (for example in Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Uganda).

REACH's own governance and management

> There is no doubt that REACH's overall governance and management have influenced the initiative's performance and results. However, country-level findings suggest that in terms of internal governance, the level of commitment and buy-in of the Technical Group and the RCC at country level is the most important factor affecting performance. This has been a strength in some countries but also a weakness because of the extent to which it is based on personalities and personal commitment. At country level, the flexibility of REACH has been important in overcoming challenges and ensuring that REACH is more effective. Support to countries by the Secretariat was considered to have improved but did not sufficiently take account of the need to provide adequate induction and support to facilitators. Furthermore, it was found that there is need for better alignment of field headquarter priorities, staffing to meet the needs of countries, and increased UN regional office links

123. **Steering Committee (SC).** The regularity of the REACH SC meetings – monthly conference calls and minimum of two face-to-face meetings per year – was

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24 Although REACH Uganda also have an office at the Office of the Prime Minister which is not yet used.

welcomed. Many different stakeholders thought that there was room for improvement in the following areas: 1) SC composition (raised by informants at global level and at country level): currently made up of nutrition specialists only[25] – whilst REACH is encouraging a multi-sectoral approach to nutrition governance both at global and country level which would imply that a broader set of specialisations should be represented; 2) SC role, and whether it should as is currently the case continue intervening in the daily business or focus more on strategic decision-making and visioning, allowing REACH to be accountable against a yearly work plan; and 3) SC communication with regional and country offices and transparency particularly as the REACH Secretariat is hosted by one of the agencies.

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25 Global Nutrition Directors for the four UN agencies and the Technical Advisor Human Health and Nutrition for IFAD holding an advisory role.

Table 18: Factors positively influencing REACH's performance at country level[38]

Influencing factors	BA	Gha	Mali	Moz	Nepal	Rwa	SL	Tz	Ug	Comments
A favourable operating environment – government supportive of nutrition				Med	High	High	High	Med		In Tanzania Govt was already bought in on nutrition. In Mozambique well-established coordination tradition benefited REACH.
Good fit REACH international and national facilitator/s (personality and expertise)		High		High			High			Experience and personality of the facilitator important. Context can be facilitating.
Institutional hosting of the REACH facilitators				High	High		Med			Can be positive or negative; in Mozambique considered to be favourable being within SETSAN; in Nepal situating REACH in Government strengthened government involvement; in Sierra Leone, presence in UNIPSIL made REACH neutral.

Key: Low = minimal impact, Med = medium impact, High = significantly important impact. Those countries without a ranking are left blank as the factor was not raised as important in tcountry case study.

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[38] The influencing factors drawn together in Tables 18 and 19 emerged from review of the country case studies. Only those factors that were common, i.e. occurred in more than two countries, were included. A rating was added following comments from the EMG.

Table 19: Factors negatively influencing REACH's performance at country level

Influencing factors	BA	Gha	Mali	Moz	Nepal	Rwa	SL	Tz	Ug	Comments
Complex government structures for nutrition	High		Med					Med		
One UN country				Low				Low		In some One UN countries REACH was seen as surplus to requirement – as coordination of the UN was already happening. However, in Rwanda it was considered a favourable factor.
In sufficient buy-in by UN partners to REACH				Low				High	High	Problematic when buy-in not sufficient or when it fluctuated e.g. Tanzania
Difficult relationship between MoH and other nutrition bodies/ministries		Med		Med						Often relating to nutrition initially being under the Department of Health and then being moved elsewhere
Government staff turnover high	Med	Med		Med	Med	Med				Can result in nutrition being moved off the agenda
High turnover of UN staff				Med				High		Loss of institutional memory and sometimes support to REACH
Political instability	Med		Med							
Divisions among dev. partners, CSOs or agencies working on nutrition	Med								High	
Lack of government buy in to the multi-sector approach			Med							
Insufficient government capacity on nutrition (human and institutional)			Med	Med	Low	Med		Low		In Mali resulting in nutrition funds not being absorbed

Key: Low = minimal impact, Med = medium impact, High = significantly important impact

124.   **The Secretariat.** The function of the Secretariat is to support the facilitators in their work, encourage and enable learning across countries and promote REACH on the global stage. It also seeks to fundraise for REACH. The support provided to countries by the Secretariat – country visits, monthly facilitation calls and other advice as required as well as guidance material – was generally considered to be helpful and to have improved over the evaluation period. The main reported negative factors pertain to the following areas:

1) Strategy and funding: there were different perspectives at HQ and field level as to what the priorities are, a lack of operational planning and succession planning in the CIPs, and a lack of transparency particularly concerning funding sources.

2) Country-level support: there were not sufficient country visits to some countries in challenging contexts such as Uganda and Mali. Although it was supportive, there was a feeling that the Secretariat had not intervened sufficiently in some cases. In Uganda this has, alongside other factors, made it very difficult for REACH to achieve its objectives.

3) Staffing and contractual arrangements: this included the junior level of staff and the use of student interns, as well as inadequate induction and training of REACH staff, affecting REACH's start up. These factors contributed towards undermining REACH's technical authority at HQ and in the countries. There were also few French speakers and there was frustration over contractual issues.

4) The linkage at regional level with the UN agencies was felt to be weak in terms of communication, fundraising and better engaging agency staff.

125.   **REACH Coordinating Committees (RCCs)**. These committees, consisting of the Heads of the four UN REACH agencies and in some cases the Resident Coordinator (Ghana, Sierra Leone), are the main governance and accountability mechanism for REACH in country. Essentially the RCCs were set up to govern/provide leadership to REACH at the country level. In this context, external and internal interviewees raised the difficulty of being accountable to a committee made up of individuals with varying levels of interest in and little personal accountability for the success or otherwise of REACH. The regularity of the RCC meetings was found to vary: Tanzania had met officially twice since 2012; in Ghana and Mozambique they met twice a year. The frequency of their meetings and extent of involvement in support of REACH was affected by workload, financial difficulties of the agencies, and personal commitment of the HOA to nutrition. As personnel at HOA level in the agencies moved on, in some countries the functionality of the RCCs changed dramatically, as was experienced in Bangladesh and Tanzania.

126.   **Technical Group.** The degree to which this group, made up of the four nutrition focal points from the UN agencies, functioned or not was reliant upon the individuals concerned and on the backing they received from the RCC (as was the case in Rwanda: the strong support to REACH by the heads of the four agencies has motivated the UN nutrition focal points to be more committed and cooperative with the REACH facilitators). In most countries the focal points met regularly. They were limited by their lack of seniority in terms of the progress they could make in positioning themselves and REACH. However, it was generally recognised to be a

useful forum for discussing bottlenecks, joint planning (Mali, Tanzania, Ghana, Mozambique) or the CIP revision (Rwanda).

REACH's partnerships and level of commitment by global and country-level partners. Coherence, alignment, and complementarity between REACH and other global and country-level nutrition initiatives (including the SUN initiative and country level development partners)

REACH has been focused on country-level action. Within the UN engagement is a function of the willingness of the agencies to collaborate. While REACH has a large network of partners with which it interacts on a regular basis it continues to be little understood and known at global level. The limited approach to partnership and the choice to keep REACH low profile has reduced REACH's overall sphere of influence.

At country level, partnerships varied, often being dependent upon those in post (particularly in the case of the UN agencies) and the skill and diplomacy of the facilitators. Lack of buy-in by partners to the CIP in some cases put REACH on a wrong footing from the start.

127.   As an inter-agency initiative, and for it to function well both at global level and at country level, REACH is reliant upon the cooperation and commitment of the four UN agencies. There is no doubt that this is a two-way process reliant not only on the willingness of the agencies but also on the facilitation skills of REACH at global and country levels: "when you work with agencies it is a heavy, delicate process...trying to get areas of common ground and build on those" (global interviewee).

128.   At global level, commitment has consisted of the four agencies participating in the Steering Committee and through their nutrition directors guiding the decision-making of REACH. The REACH MOU lays out the commitments and agreements made by the four agencies and by IFAD as an advisory agency – this is a joint initiative. At global level, REACH has lacked the mandate to engage above its Steering Committee with senior decision-makers, in the way that SUN has, and has lacked independence; it is a part of and managed by the very agencies it seeks to coordinate. However, in terms of funding to REACH at global level, commitment has been thin. The incentives within the agencies both at global and at country level are not sufficiently aligned with REACH to drive its staff to support it. So instead agency priorities tend to come first, as the agencies jostle for funding and space within the nutrition agenda rather than first collaborating (interviews). Rather than fully owning and being proud of REACH the agencies tend to see it as separate and feel it should seek its own funding and support. UN coordination is a big problem and due to the way the agencies are set up it is "not natural" for them to coordinate (interviewee).

129.   At global level, REACH has not engaged with a diverse set of partners beyond the UN where participation is a function of willingness of the agencies. There have been few CSO partners, and REACH seems to have been cautious about which other organisations and agencies it partners with. Key partners have been the Boston Consulting Group (a private company which has supported REACH in doing complex analyses and doing change management) and Columbia University (New York). As a result, REACH is not well known or understood at global level (global interviews). The lack of broad knowledge is a reflection of a deliberate decision to keep REACH low profile (in line with its facilitating function) according to REACH Secretariat interviewees. The findings from the evaluation also suggest that it may be a case of

SUN overshadowing REACH, and their complementary/overlapping roles making it difficult for REACH to have its own space.

130.   At country level, relationships with the UN agencies were very dependent upon those in post, and as noted above, when there were changes in staff REACH suffered set-backs. UN staff at country level can be sensitive to being directed in any way by REACH (Tanzania, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Ghana); the level of the international REACH facilitator (as a P4) was also considered to be an obstacle with the UN and resulted in REACH playing a supportive rather than a leading or representing role (Mozambique, Tanzania). Some felt that REACH was surplus to requirement in One UN countries (Tanzania, Rwanda). REACH had in many countries formed good partnerships with CSOs and worked with them particularly on advocacy (Tanzania, Mozambique, Ghana). Links to the private sector were limited, although relationships with GAIN were good at country level (Tanzania, Mozambique).

131.   CIPs are developed in participation with UN and government. Nonetheless the findings of the evaluation interviews consistently highlighted a perceived lack of in-depth involvement and commitment of partners (UN and government) in the development of the CIP document affected ownership of the REACH process at national level in some countries (Bangladesh, Rwanda, Tanzania). Whilst there had been exploratory missions and consultation in all countries, the lag time between the approval of the CIP and the arrival of the facilitators in country resulted in agency staff and the context having changed (see Annex L). In some countries, partnerships have also been undermined by poor relationships between key individuals, highlighting the importance of the personality and approach of the REACH facilitator (interviews). On the other side of this, in some countries the REACH facilitator has been able to effectively engage with and work alongside a range of partners very successfully, e.g. in Ghana, Mali, and Mozambique, a factor which the evaluation established from interviews was related in no small measure to the facilitators' skill set and approach. Engagement with donors outside the UN and DFATD (main funder of REACH) was in a number of cases weak both at country level and at global level.[39]

132.   REACH has worked hard to be seen as complementary to the SUN movement. It is aligned and the two work closely with SUN at country and global level. However, this complementarity and support is strongly relational and is not dictated or formalised at global or country level by guidelines. REACH was playing a key role supporting SUN in all of the evaluation country case studies, and through its facilitators has been the 'boots on the ground' for the SUN Movement. Working alongside SUN and delivering on SUN outputs was a key activity for REACH staff. This is not really taken account of in the CIPs.[40]

133.   In four of the case study countries, REACH has aligned itself fully with the national nutrition structures (Nepal, Mali, Mozambique and Sierra Leone; this approach was also attempted in Tanzania). In these countries REACH has sought to complement work being done by government, adding value through the provision of facilitative support, capacity development and, in Nepal, through complete integration with the NNFSS and its workplan, and in Mozambique by being based in SETSAN and providing technical support to it. Whilst this approach enabled REACH to align closely

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[39] Examples of the contrary were also noted, such as strong engagement with Irish Aid and with the European Union (EU) in Mozambique, however this was an exception rather than the rule.
[40] It should be noted that SUN was in its initial period of country-level engagement when most of the CIPs were being drafted.

with government and national objectives it should be noted that it was sometimes at the cost of loss of neutrality in the eyes of CSO actors, as was the case in Nepal.

134.   Whilst the CIP aimed to bring about complementarity and alignment with national nutrition initiatives whilst providing a global-level alignment through the inputs of the REACH Secretariat, this has not always been successful. The CIPs were perceived in many of the REACH countries to have been externally written and as such lacked national ownership by governments or UN agencies in country (Rwanda, Tanzania, and Bangladesh). In some countries, the country team reformulated / reprioritised the CIP to reflect the current situation (Rwanda, Mali, Ghana and Nepal) but in others key actors to some extent disengaged. In 2013, countries were able to review the CIP.

Extent to which REACH at country level has demonstrated the necessary commitment, agreement and actions to achieve objectives. Extent to which the role of REACH in the process of harmonisation and alignment has been catalytic

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REACH tools and the hard and consistent work of facilitators have played an important role in the support that has been provided to countries.

The CIPs have played a limited role in ensuring REACH was aligned and complementary due to lack of national ownership and loss of credibility because of the time lag between its design and REACH rolling out in country.

REACH has played a particular role with respect to the SUN movement, and has been a key facilitator at operational level for the SUN work, playing a significant role in the successes of SUN in all countries. However, this role was not formalised at either country or global level.

REACH has had a limited catalytic effect in the nutrition landscape in some of the country contexts.

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135.   Across the country case studies, the commitment of individual REACH staff stands out. REACH facilitators showed ingenuity, commitment and dedication in carrying out their challenging facilitating and supporting role. Staff at country level and in the Secretariat believed in the REACH approach and spoke passionately about it. The successes of REACH at country level have been correctly attributed, by the Secretariat, to a combination of hardware (products, deliverables, theories) and software (the skills and diplomacy of the individuals). Stakeholders at country level consider REACH tools valuable. Many examples were provided as to how these tools had made nutrition challenges and potential solutions clearer. However, as the previous sections (under EQ3) show, there are also factors that contribute to or serve to undermine REACH's ability to achieve its outputs and be catalytic.

136.   Therefore, although in some countries REACH stood out as having played a catalytic role in the nutrition landscape (Ghana, Nepal, Mozambique, Mali and Sierra Leone) this was not only the result of the commitment, agreement and actions of REACH. As a partnership organisation, the successes as well as the weaknesses must be acknowledged as being joint. REACH has also been acknowledged as playing a key role in the progression of the SUN movement at country level; in a number of the country case studies SUN would not have made the progress it has without the significant contributions of REACH facilitators (Ghana, Bangladesh, Mozambique,

and Nepal). However, the REACH formula does not guarantee a catalytic impact, as there are too many external (and internal) contributory factors.

2.4 To what extent are the outcomes of REACH likely to be sustainable? (Evaluation Question 4)

Sustainability of results and of REACH operational models

> There were strong consensual views from the eight case studies that the 2–3 year catalytic phase of REACH was not enough and that more time is needed to consolidate emerging gains.
>
> Government ownership has been built across countries but to varying degrees. In a few countries the capacity of the national nutrition coordination structure has been expanded (more staff, and staff at decentralized levels), contributing to stronger operational structures.
>
> Transition plans have been developed late in the REACH process. These sustainability strategies in some cases require resources to continue the facilitator position. Across the REACH countries, there was the view that effective multi-sector, multi-stakeholder coordination requires full-time staff (rather than a reduced staff load, or phasing out as envisaged by the REACH model) and that in the absence of this it is unlikely that achievements will be sustained. Commitment by nutrition actors at country level (Government, UN, other donors) for taking over the costs associated with continuing the position have, in spite of positive views on REACH's contribution, been few (with the exception of Mozambique and possibly Rwanda).
>
> Stakeholders expressed a strong concern that SUN is likely to be affected by the transitioning of REACH to new modalities, in particular if the facilitator position(s) were to be discontinued, given the key supportive role that REACH has played vis-à-vis many of the SUN focal points and the SUN processes.

137.   In most countries, progress has been made in implementing the activities of the CIPs, and the subsequent annual plans, which refined REACH's specific areas of focus, but with the limitations that were noted in the discussion above with respect to outcomes 3 and 4. Thus in terms of results, progress has been made. However, not all these results are by themselves sustainable. As was noted, for example, the updating of the mapping was highlighted at the country level as being problematic (with the exception of Nepal where the indicators have been included in national instruments for data collection). Other results are more sustainable. For example, in Mozambique SETSAN reports on progress against the multi-sectoral nutrition response to Parliament and this has been institutionalised. REACH initiated the drafting of transition plans late in the REACH process (Rwanda, December 2014). However, in some other countries, transition plans were not yet in place at the time of this evaluation, and it was unclear what their status was.

138.   In a number of the case study countries, as part of the transition process, plans were being made to continue the facilitator function, indicative of consensus that the combined facilitating and TA function of REACH needs to continue rather than be reduced or phased out. The modalities for continuing the facilitator function vary across countries. In Mozambique, the plan is that the national facilitator continues for another two years and that the position is funded by the four UN REACH agencies. Depending on funding, regional facilitators will also be recruited for the centre and

north of the country. The plan foresees continuing the position of a national facilitator on a full-time basis. In Rwanda, in spite of mixed ownership to date, the plan is that in 2016, the facilitating functions of the national REACH facilitator would be taken over by the MOH Government Nutrition Secretariat, which would provide a hosting structure, with possible technical assistance from the UN. The plan also proposes that the national facilitator position be reviewed and, as appropriate, integrated into the Government Nutrition Secretariat with funding from the UN agencies (REACH, 2015a: page 5).

Box 12: Transition planning in Mali

Mali was in the process of developing a sustainability strategy at the time of the CCS. The strategy had been shared in draft form with the four UN agencies but feedback on it had not been received. According to the draft transition plan, Mali will continue to require support in the medium term because it is not at an advanced phase of transition. The plans for transitioning REACH from January 2017 are still very tentative and require further elaboration. Overall it is clear that Mali has not reached sustainability.

139.   In Nepal there are some positive signs of the country moving in the direction of sustainability, although clearly this is still a long way off. There is the view that effective multi-sector, multi-stakeholder coordination will require full-time coordination. Government has provided resources, USD 25,000 in 2014/5, which is a positive sign. Stakeholder mapping has been incorporated into the portal and will thus continue. Both the advocacy strategy and the portal are likely to continue beyond REACH's support. Box 14 and Box 15 highlight the cases of two other countries, Mali and Bangladesh, and illustrate the variable degree of the transition planning and the limited progress in some cases. Uganda, Ghana, and Tanzania all faced similar situations with respect to the formulation of a transition strategy, albeit with specificities in each case. In the Tanzania and Ghana cases many of the stakeholders interviewed at country level were not aware that REACH was coming to an end. In Ghana, a transition plan was being drafted by REACH internally. In Tanzania, the process had up to the time of the CCS not included government.

140.   The decision in these countries to continue the position of the facilitator is reflective of the predominant opinion – across CCS – that the time frame for REACH is much too short. It also reflects the fact that limited progress has been made overall on outcomes 3 and 4 and that these need further work. Finally, it reflects concerns that emerged from the CCS that there is limited capacity at national level in many countries to be able to take over the role that REACH has played in facilitating the coordination of the nutrition response, a role that is partially related to supporting the SUN focal point.

141.   Somewhat problematic was the case of Ghana where REACH and other actors have worked hard to generate momentum around nutrition. The loss of the REACH facilitators was seen as very problematic as REACH has been playing a critical role in supporting government structures, including by funding administrative support to the SUN focal point, as has been the case in Bangladesh. Many of the stakeholders interviewed were unaware that REACH would soon be coming to an end. This was considered particularly problematic because the Nutrition Policy has not yet been approved, implementation plans have been drafted that need support in rolling out, and REACH facilitators carry out many critical and line functions which will not be taken over when they leave. When the evaluation team left the country, the transition

plan was in draft and discussions with the RCC were planned.

Box 13: Transitioning in Bangladesh

> In Bangladesh, the consensus among most stakeholders was that REACH is leaving too soon. There is a widespread view that SUN will either be much less active, or collapse after the international facilitator leaves. The greater awareness of nutrition issues and the somewhat greater degree of consultation and collaboration that REACH achieved among the four UN agencies are likely to persist at least until current key agency staff leave for new positions. Beyond that time, the case study considered it unlikely that REACH results would be sustainable within the local UN system. At the time of the CCS mission, four weeks before departure of the international facilitator, no sustainability strategy or transition plan was in place, although the facilitator still intended to draft one. There had been discussions about extending REACH, but these had been inconclusive and had come late.

REACH's contribution to increased national ownership

142.   As was the case with many other aspects examined by this evaluation, national ownership of REACH's activities varied across countries. In most countries ownership has grown since the start of REACH. However, in some cases it continues to be limited. This was the case in Tanzania where high-level Government commitment already existed but where Government expressed frustration with not having been adequately involved in the planning phases of REACH (the CIP and the annual workplans) and subsequently has been less involved[41]. Whilst in Nepal, Government ownership has increased, changes in government have affected the level of ownership during the period of REACH's engagement and efforts to regain trust of new government officials have taken time. In Mozambique, REACH has contributed to institutional strengthening of SETSAN, to better plans, higher visibility and more rigorous monitoring. REACH has also tried to ensure that technical support from different agencies is better coordinated. However, support and ownership at higher political level have been lacking for most of the evaluation period. In Uganda, the major stumbling blocks to REACH's ability (and that of all other nutrition actors, including the UN Partner agencies) to achieve intended results have been and continue to be the lack of a functioning, accountable, Food and Nutrition Council and its Secretariat; the absence of an updated, meaningful Nutrition Policy guiding nutrition scale-up; and the lack of a Nutrition Bill outlining the Government's legal obligations vis-à-vis nutrition actions and outcomes. These stumbling blocks are indicative of lack of progress against the key areas of the CIP but also highlight that in the absence of these key 'ingredients', ownership is likely to be limited and sustainability problematic. Stakeholders were of the view that without the continued support of REACH the nutrition momentum would not last. This concurs with findings from the Sierra Leone desk study, which the evaluation conducted and which is found in Annex O.

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[41] Although it must be noted that efforts have been made over the past year to reengage government and they were involved in the preparation of the REACH work plan for 2015.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Overall Assessment

143. Conducting an evaluation of this kind of process work is a challenge. It is reasonable to set out a structured set of expectations for the work of REACH. It is unreasonable to expect full compliance with those plans. As REACH stated early in its development, it was "hesitant to become too prescriptive" because that could undermine the facilitation process. In practice, the strongest REACH performance often came from strategic opportunism that did not consider itself too constrained by work plans or budgets. This evaluation therefore looks beyond the narrow enumeration of log frame achievements and gaps to assess the broader strategic relevance and effectiveness of the REACH concept.

Overall conclusion: REACH has provided relevant, timely and well-prioritized facilitation and support, enhancing nutrition responses in the countries where it has been present. REACH has contributed to greater stakeholder engagement, progress in national commitment to nutrition, more effective setting of priorities, and capacity development. REACH has also contributed to monitoring and accountability, with varying degrees of success.

The achievements and weaknesses of REACH reflect the quality of its design and implementation. Positive features include flexible procedures and implementation arrangements, field presence, quality tools and instruments, strong dialogue, neutrality, and a focus on processes as well as results. REACH has also supported SUN effectively in advancing on the nutrition agenda.

The challenges that REACH has faced reflect its weak TOC, the ambitious nature of its plans and timeframes, the sequential nature of its outcomes which required more time for implementation; the varying levels of government ownership, and lack of a partnership strategy which caused low levels of buy-in and support from its partner agencies. Overall, the results and achievements of REACH are not (yet) sustainable. The strategies for transitioning were premature in relation to progress in country, and were development later in the process.

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144. REACH has effectively focused on prioritising country-specific and country-led responses, multi-sectoral action, and the need for scaled-up action. This aligned well with global level priorities. It also fits with the agenda of UN agencies that are part of REACH. **REACH has been broadly relevant to country policies and priorities** and th**ere was good alignment between REACH and SUN at country level**, with initial confusion in some countries at least partly dissipated in implementation.

145. **In terms of results and outcomes, REACH showed variable levels of progress, reflecting different starting points and different levels of engagement and commitment at country level**. In some countries the contexts evolved considerably and this has had an impact; in others the institutional politics are so complex that it is difficult for REACH to make progress towards its intended results. These political economy issues highlight challenges of REACH's country level structure and argue in favour of REACH being led at country level by a senior-level person who can overcome these problems.

146. **Across the eight case study countries, REACH made most progress towards its outcomes 1 and 2, and less or no progress on outcomes 3 and 4.** The lack of similar levels of progress on outcomes 3 and 4 is related partly to the limited timeframes of REACH and the sequential nature of these outcomes (1 and 2 needing to be in place before 3 and 4 can become effective). Outcome 3 was particularly difficult to achieve because it required strong government commitment and buy-in.

147. **The progress of REACH was significantly influenced by the performance of the secretariat in Rome**. Although the challenges of launching REACH should not be underestimated and the creativity of those involved in identifying the REACH approach was admirable, the process was slow and in some respects disjointed and confused. The fact that a reasonably standardised programme of effort across eight or more countries later developed was due to the system and order that were gradually introduced by the Secretariat.

148. **At country level REACH was seen as having been good value for money, by stakeholders close to the initiative.** REACH budgets were underspent and were stretched further than initially anticipated to cover contract extensions for facilitators and significant time investment by REACH facilitators in SUN work.

149. In spite of the fact that REACH was based within the UN in many countries, and was involved in at least one of the countries in fundraising for a joint UN Plan, **REACH was perceived as largely neutral and at the service of the overall nutrition response, not just the UN agencies. This was an important added value** and characteristic of REACH, and gave it room, which it would not otherwise have had, to intervene and contribute.

150. A key strength of REACH was putting staff on the ground, providing facilitating and analytical inputs, and doing this in the right place at the right time. **REACH's flexibility and local decision-making structures** have allowed it to make progress in spite of challenges related to the TOC, tight time frames and contextual issues. **REACH tools** are highly considered by many stakeholders and the products of using these tools were key inputs into dialogue and agenda setting at country level, although with reservations about the complexity of some of the tools and the feasibility of updating those with local capacity. The quality and engagement of the **REACH facilitators**, and the fact that they were on the ground, has also been a key characteristic of REACH that has contributed to the progress that was made.

151. **REACH did a lot of SUN's work on the ground.** The REACH contribution to SUN in country was a positive achievement, helping make substantive progress in developing the movement, and leading to it being known widely as the SUN "boots on the ground". In other ways however, this role has created tensions and additional work for REACH facilitators. There was also little attention or discussion as to what would happen to SUN when the REACH boots walked away from the selected countries.

152. **Equity and gender received attention in REACH's design stage, but have been less prominent in implementation of REACH's plans.** As a result, stakeholders did not see REACH as strongly supporting gender and equity issues.

153. **The assumptions of the REACH TOC were relevant at the output to outcome level. However, the TOC did not take sufficient account of a number of critical factors from outcome to impact level,** including the importance of high-level political commitment from governments, the political

economy of the UN, and the lack of clear accountability and incentives for support within the UN. In addition, the TOC did not take account of the reality of changing contexts, the lack of incentives to coordinate programmes and the competition between UN agencies which continues to undermine ownership and affect commitment. It also failed to see the challenges of a structure which can only facilitate and where real change has to come from within a global system like the UN on which facilitators at country level have little influence.

154.   **REACH fits well within the international nutrition agenda and with the priorities of its convening UN agencies. However, REACH had to struggle a lot within the UN to be given a space, and on the global nutrition landscape to be understood and accepted**. There are still varying levels of ownership of REACH between countries and among different UN agencies. A variety of factors contribute to this: the lack of buy-in at operational level by UN agencies, the decision of REACH to play a low-profile facilitating role with its main focus at country level, the limited range of partnerships at global level, and the SUN overshadowing REACH in the global environment due to overlapping/similar mandates and joint work. In this context there are – in the opinion of the Evaluation Team - strong arguments for simplifying the architecture by merging SUN and REACH. In the same vein, continuing REACH as a separate initiative would need to be based on a rationale for why a separate initiative is essential to the longer-term success of REACH.

155.   **REACH's design meant that its achievements, and its failures, were ultimately a function of the level of commitment and engagement of its partner agencies and of collaborating governments.** In practice government and UN commitment were not always strong and clear enough to enable progress. In some countries the confusion created at the start resulted in scepticism about REACH on the part of government and/or the UN agencies, which was never fully resolved. The real implications of a facilitation process were not sufficiently understood by governments, which saw REACH as a modest input of technical assistance – confusing support and facilitation. Nor did the participating UN agencies in country fully appreciate the intended character and coordinating and facilitating purpose of REACH and of the need for their own engagement and commitment to change to bring about results.

156.   Any revised role for REACH would have to take into account the conclusion of this evaluation: that **the REACH theory of change was flawed in its assumption that the UN system could or would accommodate true collaboration and shared effort** between its agencies at country level in the absence of commitment from the highest level of the UN organizations, a clear mandate by the UN to coordinate and work together, and strong and enforced accountability mechanisms.

157.   **With respect to sustainability** the evaluation concludes that REACH did well but it needed a longer time frame and further investments to allow for results to be achieved and sustainability to be envisioned.

3.2   Recommendations

158.   The evaluation team formulated these recommendations at a time when various far-reaching decisions had already been made, including on(i) REACH becoming the secretariat of the UN Network for SUN; and (ii) in parallel, the roll-out of arrangements for funding REACH in additional countries. These decisions are far

reaching. These decisions assume that there is a continued need for REACH, and influence its future role, functioning, structure and scope.

159.   At an overarching level this evaluation has shown that REACH and SUN are part and parcel of the same efforts at country level. In light of this close relationship, the challenges that REACH has faced in terms of buy-in from its conveners and other initiatives, and the continued confusing global nutrition environment, much could have been said for a simpler arrangement in which REACH becomes part of the SUN movement, probably losing its name in the process. This would have addressed the critique of too many layers of coordination and greatly simplified the architecture. It would also likely have brought with it economies and efficiencies that would ensure that scarce nutrition funding is better used and would deploy combined skills. However, recommendations of this kind are not realistic given the decisions that have been taken. The evaluation thus makes the recommendations below with the intent of contributing to ensuring that continued work by REACH builds on the configuration that is now in place, works from what has worked well and addresses the key gaps that are identified in this evaluation.

R1. The core function of REACH should continue to be facilitation and coordination of country-level nutrition responses, with a strong focus on maintaining and developing its reputation for neutrality. This function should be based on two modes of intervention: one should involve multi-year facilitation services, building on the approach adopted to date; and the other should involve specialized short-term facilitation and related services, for countries meeting specific criteria.

160.   Continued support at the country level to strengthen facilitation in the SUN countries should recognize that it may be possible to continue multi-annual "REACH-like" engagements in selected countries subject to full appraisals – but that in other countries the REACH contribution will have to be on a smaller scale, with specific criteria developed to ensure feasibility. REACH's perceived neutrality has allowed it to be effective as a broker among different organizations and entities. To maintain neutrality, clear limits should be placed on the time, type of engagement and resources that REACH dedicates to supporting the UN Network for SUN.

R2. REACH should develop a medium-term vision, strategies and an operating plan for its second phase, which has a five-year timeframe to align effectively with SUN's five-year timeframe and strategy. This will require:

      i.   Extending the timeframe in existing REACH countries by two more years to consolidate gains and move towards sustainability (Bangladesh, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania).

     ii.   Adopting a five-year timeframe in new countries from the outset.

161.   REACH has operated most effectively at country level and as a contributor to the SUN movement. In the next phase 'REACH' should take a medium-term five-year vision to align with the SUN and continue to focus on facilitation and coordination services to enhance national nutrition governance overall, building on its strengths and continuing to support the implementation of the SUN vision.

R3. As part of its key strategies for engagement, REACH should encourage the UN Network for SUN – which REACH now coordinates – to align its focus with REACH's core function of facilitation and coordination. The network – and REACH's support to it – would thus have a central mission in mobilizing the technical strength of the UN for facilitating scaled-up and effective country-level nutrition responses.

162.   REACH's new and additional responsibility as Secretariat of the UN Network for SUN provides the possibility of greater alignment between SUN and REACH. There is opportunity and potential risk in the new arrangement. The opportunity lies in the fact that the valuable resources and leveraging power of the UN can be used effectively in the nutrition response. The risk is that of side-tracking what REACH has done well and of REACH losing its valuable neutrality. To address this risk, there is a need for clarity on what the UN Network for SUN can achieve and for this to align with the focus and mandate of REACH.

R4. The next phase of REACH – and further decisions on funding multi-year, country-level interventions – should be based on a thorough reappraisal of the existing REACH TOC, which should recognize that the role of REACH is facilitation and related services, rather than technical assistance or support. The new TOC should form both the role of REACH as the implementer of SUN in the field and its support to the UN Network for SUN. It should be broadly disseminated to contribute to better understanding of REACH's role in the overall nutrition environment.

163.   The design of any future REACH multi-year intervention should explicitly state and test the assumptions on which it is based and identify the conditions for receiving REACH support. The evaluation identified five conditions for implementation of REACH multi-year programming: (i) a senior REACH facilitator should be in-country for a minimum of five years; (ii) thorough, consultative preparation by and commitment from all parties; (iii) plans for supporting immediate start up; (iv) financial commitments from UN partners to supporting the REACH approach; and (v) early work on approaches to sustainability.

R5. To inform the new TOC, REACH should commission a study of the architecture of TA for scaling up nutrition. The study should include facilitation, and identify priority areas for REACH, taking into account the work of other technical support partners. The study should be used to inform REACH's medium-term plan of action and its key strategies for engagement in the coming five years (R1-R4).

164.   The evaluation has shown that where REACH has added value is in its support to facilitating the nutrition response at country level. The available evidence indicates that REACH appears to have played a unique role in terms of facilitation for various reasons, including the flexibility of its support, its perceived neutrality, and the fact that REACH's engagement is linked to a nutrition plan. The evaluation design – with its focus on the eight REACH countries – did not, however, allow it to gain a full understanding of REACH's facilitating and technical role vis à vis the overall nutrition landscape and the role of other providers of technical support. The purpose of this follow-up study would be to understand how the overall landscape aligns its future actions with this.

R6. Participating UN agencies should sign a new MOU with stronger provision that include strategic decision-making and accountability mechanisms at the most senior level of UN agencies; commitment to contributing funding to country-level REACH activities; and commitment to better coordinating their planning, resourcing, implementation and advocacy efforts in the nutrition sector at the country level.

165.   The decision for REACH to become the Secretariat of the UN Network for SUN is based on the assumption that the UN has much to offer to the nutrition response. While this is no doubt true, this evaluation found little convincing evidence that REACH has achieved significant and sustainable change in the degree of collaboration and shared effort between UN agencies on nutrition at country level in practice.

166.   Future work to support country-level coordination of nutrition interventions through REACH should be contingent on serious and public commitment at all levels of the UN to better coordinate their planning, resourcing, implementation and advocacy efforts in this sector . To this end, high-level commitments from the agencies need to be matched with commitments to collaboration at technical level, underscoring that this will entail a less agency-centred approach. In the absence of these commitments there is the risk that REACH will lose focus, waste effort and ultimately fail.

R7. The REACH Partnership should proactively explore and develop funding options and sources for this 2nd phase. Recognising its recently-augmented role regarding the UN Network for SUN, it should particularly encourage appropriate financial allocations from member agencies (see R6), by donors, and by host countries. Host Government funding should be encouraged as a means for ensuring sustainability in countries where multi-annual engagement is foreseen.

167.   It will remain difficult to source funding for REACH, particularly if donors think they are being asked to pay for coordination between UN agencies that should be able to achieve this for themselves. The new UN Network/REACH could be a good model to invest in and at the same time strengthen government support and UN coordination and coherence, as this will come with a guarantee of accountability and transparency. However, UN agencies should show their commitment to the new model by providing funding (see R6). Most importantly, REACH should encourage countries to believe in it enough to pay for it, as a few have already done. More funding should also be sought at regional and country level as occurred for Burundi and Niger. That is probably the strongest guarantee of sustainable results.

R8. Country-level implementation of REACH should continue to be guided by CIPs and annual plans. However, CIP processes should be revised to ensure maximum leadership and buy-in from all stakeholders CIPs should also adopt an approach to ensuring that equity and gender issues are part of the country-level work and global advocacy on nutrition. Ensuring that REACH has expertise in gender and equity, establishing incentives for national actions on gender and equity in nutrition, and monitoring progress against indicators are all essential.

168.   REACH experience to date has shown the importance of matching gender- and equity-sensitive planning with focused action to achieve meaningful social change that enhances nutrition. There are obvious challenges in trying to make such progress in

what has so far been the typical REACH time-span of three years. The first, pragmatic step that post-REACH interventions can take in a country is to build awareness and advocacy in government and civil society. It can also work more explicitly to facilitate amendments to staff training programmes, programme design and legislation that promote equity and gender-sensitive approaches in the nutrition sector.

Acronyms

3W	Who does What, Where?
ALMA	African Leaders Malaria Alliance
ANI	Accelerating Nutrition Improvements
ARDD	Agriculture and Rural Development Division (Nepal)
BCG	Boston Consulting Group
BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
CAN	Compendium of Actions for Nutrition
CBSF	Community based supplementary feeding
CCS	Country Case Study
CDS	Country Desk Study
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CIFF	Children's Investment Fund Foundation
CIP	country implementation plan
CMAM	Community-based management of acute malnutrition
CNN	National Nutrition Council Mali
CO	Country office
CONSAN	National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (Mozambique)
CP	Country Programme
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
CSANN	Civil Society Alliance for Nutrition, Nepal
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPG	Cross Sectoral Planning Group (Ghana)
CSPG	Cross Sectoral Planning Group
CTC	Community-based Therapeutic Care
CTIN	Multi-Sectoral Technical Committee
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DAO	Delivering as One
DEV	Development Operation
DFATD	Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DPEM	District Plans to Eliminate Malnutrition (Rwanda)
EB	Executive Board (of WFP)
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Office
ECHUI	Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative
EDPs	External Development Partners
EM	Evaluation Manager
EMG	Evaluation Management Group
EQ	Evaluation Question
EQAS	Evaluation quality assurance system (of WFP)

ER	Evaluation Report
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
FANTA	Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security
FS&NTWG	Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (Rwanda)
FSC	Food Security Cluster
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHS	Ghana Health Services
GNC	Global Nutrition Cluster
GNR	Global Nutrition Report
GPE	Global Partnership for Education (previously FTI)
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus
HKI	Helen Keller International
HLSCN	High Level Steering Committee on Nutrition
HOA	Heads of Agency
HPNSDP	Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Development Programme
HQ	Headquarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICN	International Conference on Nutrition
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPSAN	Institute for the Promotion of Food Security and Nutrition
IR	Inception Report
IYCF	Infant and young child feeding
JAPEM	Joint Action Plans to Eliminate Malnutrition
JCAS	Joint Communications and Advocacy Strategy (for nutrition)
LIC	Low Income Country
LMIC	Lower Middle Income Country
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
MCCH	Mother Child and Community Health
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDG-F	Millennium Development Goal Fund
METASIP	Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (Ghana)
MIAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MIC	Middle Income Country
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (Nepal)
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education Rwanda
MKUKUTA	National Strategy for Growth and the Reduction of Poverty (Mainland Tanzania)

MKUZA	National Strategy for Growth and the Reduction of Poverty (Zanzibar)
MND	Micronutrient deficiency
MNP	Micronutrient powder
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Ghana)
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Bangladesh)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOWCSW	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
MQSUN	Maximising the Quality of Scaling-up Nutrition
MSNP	Multi-sector Nutrition Plan (Nepal)
MSP	Multi-stakeholder Platform
NAC	Nutrition Advocacy and Communication (Uganda)
NAC	Nutrition Advocacy and Communication
NaNuPaCC	National Nutrition Partners Coordinating Committee
NCC	National Coordination Committee
NCSP	Nutrition Capacity Strengthening Plan
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission (Uganda/Ghana)
NECG	Nutrition in Emergency Coordination Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIS	National Information System
NMSEM	National Multi-sectoral Strategy to Eliminate Malnutrition in Rwanda
NNF	National Nutrition Forum
NNFSCC	National Nutrition and Food Security Coordination Committee
NNFSS	National Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat (Nepal)
NPA	National Planning Authority (Uganda)
NPC	National Planning Commission
NTWG	Nutrition Technical Working Group
NWG	Nutrition Working Group
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEV	(WFP) Office of Evaluation
OpEv	Operation Evaluation
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PAMRDC	Multisectoral Action Plan for the Reduction of Chronic Undernutrition (Mozambique)
PANITA	Partnership for Nutrition in Tanzania
PARP	Poverty Reduction Action Plan
PDR	People's Democratic Republic
PE	Policy Evaluation
PER	Public Expenditure Review

PLW	Pregnant and Lactating women
PNN	National Multi Sectoral Nutrition Plan Mali
PPI	Policy, Programme & Innovation
PRC	Programme Review Committee (of WFP)
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
QS	Quality Support
RB	Regional Bureaux
RCC	REACH Coordinating Committee
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Officer
REACH	Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition – Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Partnership (FAO, WHO, UNICEF, WFP)
SBN	SUN Business Network
SC	Steering Committee
SCN	(UN) Standing Committee on Nutrition
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SDD	Social Development Division
SE	Strategic Evaluation
SETSAN	State Secretariat for Food Security (Mozambique)
SO	Strategic Objective
SP	Strategic Plan
SPRING	Strengthening Partnerships, Results and Innovations in Nutrition Globally
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
SUNPMT	Scaling Up Nutrition Planning and Monitoring Tool
TA	Technical Assistance
TF	therapeutic feeding
TFD	Targeted Food Distributions
TFNC	Tanzanian Food and Nutrition Centre
TL	Team Leader
TNFC	Tanzanian Food and Nutrition Centre
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TP	Technical Panel
UGAN	Uganda Group for Action on Nutrition
UMIC	Upper-Middle Income Country
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	The joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNAP	Uganda Nutrition Action Plan
UNAP	United Nations Action Plan
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDAP	United Nations Development Assistance Program

UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCN	UN Standing Committee on Nutrition
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	video conference
VDC	Village Development Committee (Nepal)
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WG	Working Group
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZHC	Zero Hunger Challenge

Office of Evaluation
www.wfp.org/evaluation

WFP
World Food Programme
wfp.org

FAO
FIAT PANIS

unicef
unite for children

World Health Organization

Canada