
A GUIDE FOR INTEGRATING NUTRITION INTO DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

ELECTRONIC VERSION



MINISTERIO
DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA
Y COOPERACIÓN



A guide for integrating nutrition into development interventions

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Official online publication ID: 109-25-012-3

General catalogue of official publications: <https://cpage.mpr.gob.es> | www.aecid.es

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Acknowledgements: This study has been undertaken by Fiorella Paredes y Santiago Ripoll at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) within the minor services contract titled “*Strengthening the capacity of the Rural Development, Food security and Nutrition Unit at AECID in relation to the analysis and perception of nutrition-related projects in Spanish Cooperation*”.

To the 20 individuals who were interviewed as part of this guide and whose names appear on page 15.

To Nuria San Segundo for all the administrative work required to bring this document to fruition.

Recommended citation: AECID (2025). *A guide for integrating nutrition into development interventions*. Madrid: AECID. Spanish Cooperation Handbooks 2025, number 13. Electronic version.

Original design: Communications team.

Layout: Lara Lanceta

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INTRODUCTION



Food and nutrition security has been, is and will continue to be a strategic priority for Spanish Cooperation in the fight to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition. Our work is based on the human right to food, combating food insecurity, obesity, overweight and undernutrition, and helping achieve adequate nutrition by ensuring that all people have access to sufficient, healthy and nutritious food.

In line with this approach, which is outlined in our 2024-2027 Master Plan, AECID has prepared this guide to integrating nutrition into the Agency's interventions to further demonstrate our commitment in this vital field. Our purpose is to effectively attain the Sustainable Development Goals and to support our partners in the triple transition, which combines social, green and economic challenges.

This guide will underpin AECID's work to combat chronic, transitory and seasonal food insecurity, encouraging climate-resilient agriculture that ensures food security and balanced nutrition for all people, without jeopardising the economic, social and environmental foundations that will provide food and nutrition security for future generations. Agrifood systems must give all people access to sustainable diets and so we will work to foster seed saving initiatives, providing emergency food assistance and aid to vulnerable populations, whilst paying special attention to combating undernutrition in children and women.

International commitments in this field —such as Nutrition Team Europe, the 2025 N4G Summit in Paris and the 2025 global meeting of the SUN Movement— compel us to remain vigilant in this field so that we can bring a wide range of insights and best practice from AECID's day-to-day work to these events.

Through case studies, this guide brings together the experiences and best practices of four Spanish Cooperation Offices abroad: Guatemala, Honduras, Niger and Mozambique. The case studies outline how we work with these four key partner countries on nutrition projects.

Lastly, our hope is that this guide helps progress knowledge management in the field of nutrition, integrating this issue into AECID's interventions in all sectors and providing valid points of reference for Spanish Cooperation as a whole and for other bilateral and multilateral partners as well.



STUDY PARAMETERS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1

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The guide's aim is to document AECID's programme and operational experiences in the field of nutrition and to record the impact of AECID's work on nutrition within the international nutrition cooperation context. This guide seeks to add to AECID's legacy by laying out the conceptual and practical advances made in the Agency's nutrition interventions. The guide includes a historical analysis of AECID-funded nutrition interventions, and an analysis of the latest trends in different countries within the sphere of Spanish Cooperation. It also explores Spanish Cooperation's presence and influence in international nutrition forums.

This study takes a critical look at the discursive construction of nutrition and nutrition interventions using an applied approach, and is designed to generate practical applications with a real impact on programmes and projects.

The study is based on the following activities: (i) a literature review of policies, programmes and projects funded by Spanish Cooperation in the field of nutrition, as well as relevant scientific literature on social sciences, the history of cooperation, public health and nutrition; (ii) a review of OECD databases using nutrition codes (basic nutrition and nutrition marker), and other databases; (iii) an analysis of developments in the financial and thematic resources (and theoretical approaches) linked to nutrition projects using a gender and cross-cutting approach; (iv) anonymous interviews with key figures involved in the implementation and assessment of nutrition programmes: workers at AECID's head offices (4) workers at AECID's Spanish Cooperation offices (7), workers at NGOs (6), workers at international organisations (4) and national nutrition experts (3). Case studies have also been used to expand learning on nutrition. The countries and international programmes selected are those where AECID has worked on innovative and interesting nutrition initiatives: Mozambique, Niger, Honduras, and Guatemala and the Parliamentarians Against Hunger initiative. The appendix to this section contains a full list of interviewees.

Please note that this guide complements the sectoral guide on rural development, agriculture, food security and nutrition¹, published by AECID in 2022. The main focus of this guide are specific nutrition interventions. Nutrition is understood here as a concept and framework within international cooperation that is interlinked with food security and rural and agricultural development, and which also has links to other areas, such as water and sanitation, health, education, etc.

¹ <https://bibliotecadigital.aecid.es/bibliodig/es/consulta/registro.do?id=13279>

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As already mentioned, AECID-funded and AECID-led nutrition interventions are prioritised in the documenting of experiences. As the study aims to show how the nutrition debate and practices have changed over time, the objective is not to provide closed definitions of malnutrition and nutrition intervention within the context of development. In the field of cooperation and within the various theoretical frameworks, nutrition's status has changed significantly over time and different types of intervention have been implemented by public, private and third sector institutions.

To reflect the recent history of AECID-funded nutrition interventions and to present a position in the current global and regional debates on nutrition, this study focuses on the following aspects:

1. The professional experience of development workers involved in nutrition interventions, roles within AECID's organisational structure and other collaborators in nutrition cooperation.
2. Changes in nutrition interventions over time:
 - Intervention types (direct and indirect)
 - Variations in the use of theoretical frameworks
3. Developments in nutrition strategies and projects:
 - Changes in the design of strategies and projects
 - Identifying the influence of Spanish Cooperation's funding on these changes
 - Changes in funding and support tools
4. Nutritional best practice and learning in AECID-funded interventions:
 - Outstanding examples and challenges faced
 - Factors in achieving nutrition impacts
5. The gender approach in nutrition projects:
 - Including the gender approach from an organisational learning perspective
 - Specific gender interventions and mainstreaming gender
6. Success factors and barriers:
 - Factors in achieving nutrition impacts
 - Barriers and opportunities
7. Identifying recommendations for AECID:
 - Nutrition intervention improvements
 - Status in global and regional forums

KEY CONCEPTS

Nutrition-sensitive agriculture: An approach that seeks to maximise agriculture's contribution to nutrition. It involves designing agricultural systems that stimulate dietary diversity, improve the nutritional content of crops and address the underlying causes of malnutrition in rural communities.

- » **For more information:** [Nutrition-sensitive agriculture: The cornerstone of a healthier world \(ifad.org\)](https://www.ifad.org)

Healthy food / diet: A variety of low-processed foods from all food groups with limited intake of highly-processed foods. This includes whole grains, nuts, fruit and vegetables and a moderate amount of animal protein.

- » **For more information:** <https://www.who.int/es/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet>

Diet quality: Includes variety, adequacy, moderation and a balanced nutrient intake. It also takes into account food security hazards.

The double burden of malnutrition: This is the coexistence of undernutrition and overweight/obesity within the same population, household or individual. It reflects the nutritional transitions of developing countries and poses complex challenges for public health policies.

- » **For more information:** [The Lancet 2019 Double Burden of Malnutrition- \(unicef.org\)](https://www.unicef.org)

Wasting: Low weight-for-height, often resulting from recent weight loss due to inadequate dietary intake and/or disease. In children under five years of age, it is defined as weight-for-height below -2 standard deviations from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards.

- » **For more information:** [Nutrition and care for children with wasting | UNICEF](https://www.unicef.org)

Food environment: The physical, economic, political and socio-cultural context in which consumers interact with agrifood systems to make decisions about acquiring, preparing and consuming food.

- » **For more information:** https://foodpolicycoalition.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Discovering-the-role-of-food-environments_ES_reducido-1.pdf

Food education: Strategies and activities designed to encourage healthy eating habits by increasing knowledge, changing attitudes and developing individual and shared skills. Essential for fostering sustainable and informed eating choices.

- » **For more information:** [¿Qué es la educación nutricional y por qué es tan importante? | Acción contra el hambre \(accioncontraelhambre.org\)](#)

Agrifood system approach: A holistic approach that looks at all stages and players involved in the production, distribution, consumption and elimination of food. It takes into account the complex interactions between these elements and their impact on nutrition, the environment and the economy.

- » **For more information:** [NewScience2015.pdf \(ipes-food.org\)](#)

Nutritional status: Physiological state resulting from the food eaten, needs and the body's capacity to digest, absorb and use these nutrients.

Hunger: Uncomfortable and painful physical sensation caused by insufficient dietary energy. Synonym for chronic undernutrition, measured by the prevalence of undernourishment.

- » **For more information:** [Hunger | FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#)

Severe food insecurity: A situation that threatens lives or means of livelihood in a specific area at a specific time, regardless of the reason or duration. It guides actions focused on short-term objectives to prevent or mitigate severe food insecurity.

- » **For more information:** [Hunger | FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation](#)

The '1,000 days' refers to the critical period between a women's pregnancy and her child's second birthday. It is an essential window of opportunity for optimum nutrition, as it impacts significantly on the child's cognitive and physical development. Adequate nutrition during this period can prevent growth delays, reduce poverty and improve general health. Interventions during this window of opportunity are considered highly effective for long-term health and development.

- » **For more information:** [Why 1,000 Days - 1,000 Days \(thousanddays.org\)](#)

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Malnutrition: Condition caused by inadequate, imbalanced or excessive intake of nutrients. Includes both undernutrition and overweight/obesity, as well as diet-related non-communicable diseases.

» **For more information:** [Malnutrition \(who.int\)](http://who.int)

UNICEF Conceptual Framework on the Determinants of Child Nutrition: a key tool for understanding the causes of malnutrition. The framework identifies three levels: immediate determinants (inadequate food intake and disease), underlying determinants (food insecurity, inadequate care, unhealthy environments) and enabling determinants (socio-economic and political context). The framework highlights the way these elements are interlinked and guides comprehensive interventions to improve child nutrition.

» **For more information:** [Child nutrition | UNICEF](#)

Community nutrition: An approach whereby nutritional status at a community level is improved through community-based and culturally appropriate interventions. It requires local resources to be mobilised and community empowerment to address specific nutrition problems.

Nutrition in emergencies: Specific nutrition interventions implemented when humanitarian crises, natural disasters or conflict occur. The aim is to prevent severe undernutrition, keep people healthy and save lives in situations where there is little access to food and basic services.

» **For more information:** [Designing nutrition programmes in emergencies| UNHCR](#)

Gender-sensitive nutrition: An approach that acknowledges and addresses the different nutritional needs, roles and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys. It looks at how gender standards affect access to food, decision-making and nutritional status, seeking equity in nutrition interventions.

» **For more information:** <https://www.nipn-nutrition-platforms.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Integrating-gender-in-NIPN-activities.pdf>

Dietary energy requirements: The energy needed to maintain bodily functions, health and normal levels of activity. This varies according to age, gender, size and level of physical activity.

» **For more information:** [Dietary energy | Nutrition| Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(fao.org\)](#)

Nutritional resilience: The ability of individuals, households and communities to maintain or improve their nutritional status to respond to shock or stress (such as natural disasters, financial crises and conflict). It includes adaptive strategies to ensure adequate nutrition in adverse circumstances.

» **For more information:** [Resilience building | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](https://www.wfp.org)

Stunting: Low height-for-age, it reflects past episodes of sustained undernutrition. In children under five years of age, it is defined as height-for-age below -2 standard deviations from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards.

» **For more information:** [Childhood Stunting: Context, Causes and Consequences \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int)

Food security and nutrition: The I World Food Summit states that “food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.

This concept has changed over time, responding to the multidimensional, multi-stakeholder and multi-level approach (global, national and individual). It has moved from a food-supply approach, focusing on food availability alone, towards physical and economic access to food, expanding the focus from a national and global level to a family, local and individual level. Subsequently, as a result of publications by The Lancet, the Scaling Up Nutrition movement and the 1,000 days initiative, among others, a nutrition approach was seen as key to an active and healthy life. This led to nutrient balance, care, access to drinking water and sanitation, access to health and the availability of healthy environments being added to the concept. In 2012, the Committee on Food Security (CFS) acknowledged that nutrition was an essential part of the food security concept.

Furthermore, given the seasonality issues facing vulnerable populations, stability was added as another dimension of food security and nutrition.

In addition, in 2020 the High Level Panel of Experts of the Committee on World Food Security noted that two further essential aspects must be recognised:

The first is sustainability, which refers to the capacity of food systems to provide long-term food security and nutrition without jeopardising the economic, social and environmental foundations that will ensure food security and nutrition for future generations.

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The second aspect is agency, which refers to the capacity of individuals or groups to make their own decisions about the food they eat and produce. It also encompasses the way food is produced, prepared and distributed in food systems, and the capacity of individuals or groups to take part in the processes that shape food system policies and governance.

- » **For more information:** https://bibliotecadigital.aecid.es/biblio-dig/es/catalogo_imagenes/grupo.do?path=1031351

Food sovereignty: The right of peoples to define their own farming and food systems. This approach prioritises local production, access to productive resources and participation in decision-making about food policies, fostering autonomy and sustainability.

- » **For more information:** [What is Food Sovereignty? - Via Campesina](#)

Overweight and obesity: Higher than normal weight-for-height, as a result of excessive fat deposits. In adults, it is defined as a BMI greater than or equal to 25 kg/m² for overweight and greater than or equal to 30 kg/m² for obesity.

- » **For more information:** [Obesity and overweight \(who.int\)](#)

APPENDIX 1 OF SECTION 1. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Below is a list of interviewees who make key contributions to the field of nutrition, food security and nutrition on a global level. Their contributions to this guide have therefore been essential and we would like to express our gratitude for their thoughts, willingness and support.

| No. | INTERVIEWEE | ORGANISATION |
|-----|--------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Menna Segred Abraha | Acción contra el Hambre (ACH) |
| 2 | Cristina Fernández Simon | Acción contra el Hambre (ACH) |
| 3 | Antonio Vargas Brizuela | Acción contra el Hambre (ACH) |
| 4 | Amador Gómez Arriba | Acción contra el Hambre (ACH) |
| 5 | David Montesinos Sánchez | AECID- Spanish Cooperation Office in Guatemala |
| 6 | Fernando Regulez | AECID- Spanish Cooperation Office in Mozambique |
| 7 | Juan Jose Lavin | AECID- Spanish Cooperation Office in Niger |
| 8 | María Aguado Alvarez | AECID- Spanish Cooperation Office in Honduras |
| 9 | Ana Regina Segura | AECID - Rural Development, Food Security and Nutrition Unit |
| 10 | José Luis Burgos | AECID- Gender Unit |
| 11 | Oriana Ramírez | AECID- Health Team |
| 12 | Belén Llera | AECID- Office for Humanitarian Action |
| 13 | José María Medina | Enraíza Derechos |
| 14 | Luis Lobo | FAO – Support for the Hunger Free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative |
| 15 | Juan Echanove | FAO- Right to Food Office |
| 16 | Claire Mason | FAO- Right to Food Office |
| 17 | Alba Rodríguez Díaz | FIIAPP: EU4SUN project |
| 18 | Enrique De Loma-Osorio | Author of the Spanish Cooperation Strategy for the Fight Against Hunger |
| 19 | Gabriel Ferrero De Loma-Osorio | Ambassador at Large for Global Food Security |
| 20 | José Luis Vivero Pol | WFP |



PAPA
CHINA

CURCUMA

PAMARILLA

YUCA
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GLOBAL NUTRITION OVERVIEW

2

The world faces numerous nutritional challenges; although undernutrition remains a priority and hunger numbers persist, non-communicable diseases caused or exacerbated by overweight and obesity have taken centre stage among global concerns, given their exponential increase in countries of the global south and not only in industrialised countries.

The Covid-19 pandemic aggravated food insecurity, drastically increasing the number of people without access to adequate diets and undermining the progress made, which at the same time hinders an individual's ability to lead an active and healthy life.

The sharp increase in global hunger between 2019 and 2021 has not been reversed in the following three years, with 9.1% of the population (between 713 and 757 million people) suffering from hunger in 2023 and 7.5% in 2019, i.e. a rise of 152 million people.

Percentage-wise, the highest share of the population affected by hunger is in Africa with 20.4%, followed by Asia with 8.1%, Oceania with 7.3% and Latin America and the Caribbean with 6.2%. In terms of numbers of people however, Asia is at the top of the list.

According to the Global Hunger Index, hunger is alarming or serious in 41 countries; hunger index scores are alarming in 6 countries and serious in 35 countries.

The United Nations Decade of Family Farming

| No. | COUNTRY | 2024 GHI | No. | COUNTRY | 2024 GHI | No. | COUNTRY | 2024 GHI |
|-----|-----------------------|----------|-----|--------------------------|----------|-----|-------------|----------|
| 1 | Burundi | 35-49.9 | 2 | South Sudan | 35-49.9 | 3 | Somalia | 44.1 |
| 4 | Yemen | 41.2 | 5 | Chad | 36.4 | 6 | Madagascar | 36.3 |
| 7 | Dem. Rep. of Congo | 34.9 | 8 | Haiti | 34.1 | 9 | Niger | 34.1 |
| 10 | Liberia | 31.9 | 11 | Central African Republic | 31.5 | 12 | North Korea | 31.4 |
| 13 | Sierra Leon | 31.2 | 14 | Afghanistan | 30.8 | 15 | Zambia | 30.7 |
| 16 | Guinea-Bissau | 30.5 | 17 | Syria | 30.3 | 18 | Sudan | 28.8 |
| 19 | Papua New Guinea | 28.8 | 20 | Nigeria | 28.8 | 21 | Pakistan | 27.9 |
| 22 | Zimbabwe | 27.6 | 23 | Mozambique | 27.5 | 24 | Uganda | 27.3 |
| 25 | India | 27.3 | 26 | East Timor | 27.0 | 27 | Angola | 26.6 |
| 28 | Ethiopia | 26.2 | 29 | Rwanda | 25.2 | 30 | Kenya | 25.0 |
| 31 | Benin | 24.7 | 32 | Burkina Faso | 24.6 | 33 | Mali | 24.0 |
| 34 | Republic of the Congo | 24.0 | 35 | Guinea | 23.2 | 36 | Tanzania | 22.7 |
| 37 | Malawi | 21.9 | 38 | Djibouti | 21.1 | 39 | Mauritania | 21.1 |
| 40 | Botswana | 20.7 | 41 | Ivory Coast | 20.6 | 42 | Lesotho | 10-19.9* |
| 43 | Gambia | 19.9 | 44 | Laos PDR | 19.8 | 45 | Namibia | 19.7 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|------|----|-------------------|------|----|------------|------|
| 46 | Solomon Islands | 19.4 | 47 | Bangladesh | 19.4 | 48 | Libya | 19.2 |
| 49 | Guatemala | 18.8 | 50 | Comoros | 18.8 | 51 | Togo | 18.6 |
| 52 | Cameroon | 18.3 | 53 | Gabon | 17.4 | 54 | Indonesia | 16.9 |
| 55 | Bolivia | 16.8 | 56 | Myanmar | 15.7 | 57 | Eswatini | 15.7 |
| 58 | Honduras | 15.6 | 59 | Senegal | 15.3 | 60 | Venezuela | 15.1 |
| 61 | Iraq | 14.9 | 62 | Nepal | 14.7 | 63 | Cambodia | 14.7 |
| 64 | Philippines | 14.4 | 65 | Ghana | 13.9 | 66 | Tajikistan | 13.7 |
| 67 | Nicaragua | 13.6 | 68 | Egypt | 13.2 | 69 | Mauritius | 12.8 |
| 70 | Malaysia | 12.7 | 71 | South Africa | 12.5 | 72 | Jordan | 12.0 |
| 73 | Ecuador | 11.6 | 74 | Vietnam | 11.3 | 75 | Sri Lanka | 11.3 |
| 76 | Suriname | 10.9 | 77 | Trinidad & Tobago | 10.8 | 78 | Fiji | 10.2 |
| 79 | Thailand | 10.1 | | | | | | |

Source: Global Hunger Index (GHI) scores by 2024 GHI rank - a peer-reviewed annual report designed to comprehensively measure and track global hunger at the global, regional and country levels.

Key:

- **Alarming: GHI 35.0–49.9**
- **Moderate: GHI 10.0–19.9**
- **Serious: GHI 20.0–34.9**
- **Countries where the AECID intervenes**

AECID works in 7 of the 35 countries where the Global Hunger Index is serious: Haiti, Niger, Nigeria, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Mali and Mauritania; and in 10 of the 37 countries where hunger is moderate. The projects undertaken in countries with a serious or moderate GHI score undoubtedly aim to meet objectives set in accordance with their own needs, which go far beyond the GHI. There are many challenges to tackling hunger in these countries, including numerous crises that aggravate the situation, such as conflict, climate change, the high cost of food, market disruptions, economic crises and debt in countries with low and middling incomes.

In addition, 28.9% of the world's population experienced moderate or severe food insecurity, i.e. 2.33 billion people lacked systematic access to adequate food. There were no substantial changes in the prevalence of food insecurity or severe food insecurity in Africa, North America, Asia or Europe, but the figures worsened in Oceania and there were signs of progress in Latin America.

The average figure globally for moderate or severe food insecurity stands at 28.9% and this figure almost doubles in Africa, where the issue affects 58% of the population in that region. The figure in Latin America is 28.2%, similar to the world average, in Asia it is 24.8%, slightly below the average, and in North America and Europe, there is a prevalence of 8.7%.

Food prices increased in 2022, pushing up the average cost of a healthy diet globally to 3.96 PPP (purchasing power parity) dollars per day per person from an estimated 3.56 PPP dollars in 2021, reflecting an increase of 11.2%. This rise has been driven by the disruptions caused by Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine.



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The cost of a healthy diet varies greatly. This figure is highest in Latin America and the Caribbean, where it stands at 4.56 PPP dollars, compared to 4.20 PPP dollars in Asia, and 3.47 PPP dollars in Africa. Thus, 1.68 billion people or 59% of the population globally who could not afford a healthy diet in 2022 lived in lower middle-income countries. When analysing the percentage of the population that could not afford a healthy diet, the highest percentage relates to low-income countries (71.5%), followed by lower middle-income countries (52.6%) and upper middle-income countries (21.5%).

Furthermore, Latin America and the Caribbean are facing an increase in undernourishment and child stunting, a stagnation in child wasting and a lower than average decrease in child mortality. In addition, as a result of rising food prices, over 133 million Latin Americans cannot afford a healthy diet, resulting in the region being affected by the triple burden of malnutrition, i.e. undernutrition, overweight and obesity, impacting up to 62.5% of the population in the region, and micronutrient deficiencies, causing serious diet-related health problems (Morris et al. 2020).

AECID faces significant challenges in its cooperation role in middle- and low-income countries. On the one hand, low-income countries, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa and Haiti, face undernutrition, hunger and food insecurity. Middle-income countries on the other hand, such as those located in Latin America and the Caribbean, face multiple challenges linked to the triple burden of malnutrition; in this region, AECID works in 20 countries.

KEY IDEAS IN THIS SECTION

- The progress made in global nutrition has seen a reversal in recent years.
- The sharp increase in hunger has not abated, with Africa accounting for the largest proportion of the affected population.
- The GHI score is alarming in 6 countries, 5 of which are in Africa.
- The GHI score is serious in 35 countries, 27 of them in Africa, 1 in the Caribbean, 1 in Oceania and 6 in Asia. AECID works in 7 of the 35 countries with a serious GHI score.
- The global average of moderate or severe food insecurity is 28.9%, affecting 58% of the African population, and 28.2% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Food prices increased in 2022, and the cost of a healthy diet is highest in Latin America and the Caribbean. This region also faces the triple burden of malnutrition: undernutrition, overweight and obesity and micronutrient deficiencies.
- AECID works in 20 countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

For more information:

- Global Hunger Index [2017 Global Hunger Index: The Inequalities of Hunger](#)
- The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World: [content \(fao.org\)](#)

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**HISTORY
AND TRENDS IN
AECID'S NUTRITION
INTERVENTIONS**

3

Nutrition has been and continues to be a priority issue for the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID). Since the agency's creation, nutrition has been woven into its management tools, such as the Master Plans, and into Spain's original 1998 legislation on international development cooperation that led to the agency being set up (LCID in Spanish).

This priority was restated by Spanish Act 1/2023 on cooperation for sustainable development and global solidarity, which was approved in 2023 and updated Spain's cooperation policy. The legislation reinforced the priority given to nutrition by fostering social justice, fighting against hunger and all forms of malnutrition, promoting health and universal health coverage, and supporting food security and sustainable and resilient agriculture and food systems, including fishing and family farming.

The ongoing importance of nutrition throughout AECID's history has warranted a number of changes to nutrition interventions based on insights from the field. Elements from global agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, have also been included.

AECID's defining attributes were identified and adopted from the very beginning and over time, they have been restated, expanded or strengthened in their approach: a commitment to the human right to food, a multidimensional approach to nutrition linked to food security and nutrition and sustainable food systems. This has come about in part because its actions have included middle-income countries, such as those in Latin America, where a holistic approach is required, and also as a result of the 360° view of malnutrition, not just undernutrition in isolation.



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AECID AND NUTRITION - MASTER PLANS AND OTHER MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Nutrition has been a strategic focus for AECID. It's importance is reflected in the creation of AECID through the Spanish law on international development cooperation, in which food security is set out as a basic service. This grants nutrition the status of an essential condition for human development and overcoming poverty, on the same level as health, education, sanitation, and human resources training. Although the 1998 legislation on international development cooperation includes nutrition within food security without expressly mentioning it, the Master Plans clearly identify nutrition and explain the approaches to it.

The First Master Plan 2001-2004 identifies nutrition as a cross-cutting priority. It is recognised as a key part of the fight against poverty and it is seen as a multidimensional issue where the emphasis is on education, health, political participation and access to adequate food. As mentioned in the Master Plans, these factors also condition an individual's ability to enjoy equal opportunities and live in a more secure environment.

Food aid is also included, with three different types: project-based food aid, with previously defined objectives and beneficiaries, government-to-government food transfers, and emergency aid. The plan clearly cautions that the Spanish strategy to fight poverty must include food security objectives and greater planning of actions.

In other words, the First Master Plan emphasises that the Spanish strategy's approach to nutrition is primarily linked to development and the multidimensional fight against poverty, and to a lesser extent to food assistance only. This approach has been restated over time with subsequent Master Plans integrating it, albeit incorporating the changes needed over time as a result of insights gained.

The Second Master Plan 2005-2008 restates that the main objective of public development cooperation policy is the fight against poverty. It consolidates its understanding of poverty as a multidimensional issue, focusing on expanding the rights, opportunities and capacities of the disadvantaged population. Here, the plan mentions several aspects of poverty linked to human capacity. The economic aspect includes income, livelihoods and decent work. The human aspect includes health and education. And the political aspect includes socio-cultural and welfare capacities. Gender is also included in the Master Plan as an essential element for reducing poverty in all its forms.

In line with the above, strategic objectives are set out to increase institutional, social, human and economic capacity, to improve environmental sustainability, increase freedom and cultural capacities, increase female autonomy and to boost conflict prevention and peace building. The human capacity objectives are given greater importance, as they link with the objectives and goals of the Millennium Declaration.

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Within the human capabilities, health, sanitation, education and achieving food security are highlighted, and priority is therefore given to the following areas of action: food sovereignty, combating hunger, education, public health, welfare, basic living conditions, access to drinking water and basic sanitation. It is agreed that hunger strategies must be drawn up around the causes of food insecurity, and they must include support for small-scale agricultural operations and family farms, traditional fishing and various community-based and sustainable ways of using forest resources.

Commitment to nutrition is thus reiterated in terms of addressing it from a multidimensional perspective of combating poverty, with a focus on food sovereignty and security. This line of action has continued since the First Master Plan.

The Second Master Plan made the link between human capacity and human, economic and cultural rights, adding a new element. This paved the way for addressing the human right to food, which is fundamental, given the impetus AECID has given to this right. Spanish Cooperation's 2007 strategy on combating hunger takes up the points made by FIAN (2005), highlighting that the difference between food security and the right to food lies in the responsibility of the States Parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These States are legally required to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the right to food. To this end, they are obliged to: (i) respect existing access to adequate food, which requires States not to take measures of any kind that result in preventing such access, (ii) uphold the obligation to protect, which requires the State to take measures to ensure that enterprises and individuals do not deprive people of access to adequate food, (iii) uphold the obligation to promote, which means that the State must endeavour to promote activities to strengthen people's access to and utilisation of resources and means to ensure their livelihoods, including food security; and v) where an individual or group is unable, for reasons beyond their control, to enjoy the right to adequate food by the means at their disposal, States have the obligation to fulfil that right directly.

It therefore highlights that Spanish Cooperation's strategy to combat hunger should help improve family food security, which implies access to resources and gender equality, as well as the right to food.

It also adds a frame of reference for those people working to combat hunger, which includes fostering strong governmental support, achieving political and economic commitment from states to fight hunger, and prioritising the fight against hunger within the framework of poverty reduction strategies and national development plans from the perspective of the human right to food. In addition, it points out that interventions are most effective when they are backed up by a strategy that is prepared and led by a national government in collaboration with civil society and political and social groups. Recipient countries must "own" development objectives and strategies.

The actions driven by Spanish Cooperation therefore seek to ensure that countries have a National Food Security Policy in place and a legal framework that sets out the institutional structure required to implement the policy.

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The second plan showed that food security projects linked to initiatives to strengthen local government bodies help raise the status of food security until it gradually becomes part of local development plans, thus guaranteeing the sustainability of these actions in the future.

This expands the way nutrition interventions are managed. Special attention is paid to the role of governments, and to their political and economic commitments in the fight to combat hunger. All these actions are undertaken under the umbrella of the human right to food approach. Political action is therefore tacitly mentioned as a core element in the fight to reduce hunger and deliver food and nutrition security. The role of Spanish Cooperation is defined as providing technical support for the preparation and implementation of food security policies.

The human right to food approach is expanded in the Third Master Plan 2009-2012. This plan adopts a broad view of the Rights-Based Approach (RBA), which states that development objectives must be based on the fulfilment of the human rights of everyone, entailing political and legal commitment. The plan also places emphasis on observing and complying with international legal frameworks on human rights. These frameworks are primarily included in United Nations' conventions and conferences.

The overall objective of the Third Master Plan is sustainable human development, poverty eradication and the fulfilment of rights. The Plan aims to make substantial progress towards achieving these goals. To do this, the rural development and fight against hunger sector must help fulfil the human right to food and improve living conditions and food security in rural and urban populations.

To deliver the human right to food, five specific objectives were identified: i) promote access to decent and adequate food in accordance with local diversity and the nutritional needs of each population group, and more vulnerable urban and rural populations, paying special attention to boys and girls in early childhood, ii) foster and support sustainable production systems and small-scale producers, iii) support and stimulate rural development from a local perspective, encouraging vulnerable groups and all stakeholders to improve rural areas, iv) on an international level, foster the agreements needed to fulfil the right to food and improve people's living conditions and nutrition, particularly of vulnerable groups, and v) encourage scientific and technological research on agrifood and rural development and stimulate the generation of local knowledge on combating hunger.

Spanish Cooperation therefore stands out for its comprehensive approach to nutrition, where food security and rural development come together. The agency's creation and experience is consolidated in its commitment to food security and nutrition, and also in comparison to interventions that focus only on food assistance.

Moreover, the partner country's leadership, governance and the role of donor countries as facilitators and supporters are all confirmed as key elements in the creation of opportunities. This is in line with the idea of capacity development as endogenous development.



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The Rights-Based Approach (RBA) is undoubtedly a central part of AECID's approach to nutrition. This approach is restated once again in the Fourth Master Plan 2013-2016, which is referred to as the heart and soul of Spanish Cooperation and which shapes its essence.

The Fifth Master Plan also includes the RBA, confirming the agency's commitment to international human rights and development treaties. It also embraces the five priorities set out in the 2030 Agenda: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. The RBA, basic freedoms, gender equality, respect for cultural diversity and environmental sustainability all cut across the Master Plan.

It thus sets out four overarching objectives relating to the four strands of the 2030 Agenda: (i) End poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions, foster resilience and ensure that all human beings can realise their potential with dignity and equality and in a healthy environment, ii) Protect the planet through sustainable production and consumption, natural resource management, and by adopting urgent action to address climate change, (iii) Encourage integrated, inclusive and sustainable economic development that reduces inequality, reinforces equity and people's capabilities, so that all human beings can live prosperous and fulfilling lives; and (iv) Foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies, free from fear and violence.

Emphasis is made here that to eradicate poverty in all its dimensions, inequalities need to be reduced and equality reinforced. The plan therefore points out that all Spanish Cooperation programmes must be holistic: In other words, although they focus on a specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), they must consider the four strands, in addition to the SDGs as a whole.

By doing this, the plan reiterates its vision of a multidimensional approach to poverty, although strictly speaking, it is aligned with the SDGs and, in turn, Spanish Cooperation's development outcomes agreed with partners using its own planning tools, such as the Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs), which facilitate dialogue-based and consensual cooperation.

It also highlights that, in order to achieve SDG2 Zero Hunger, the root of the problem must be tackled over the long-term and agrifood systems and inclusive production strengthened. In this context, it reiterates that child undernutrition is a priority issue with many causes, epidemic food aspects and has a major impact on child mortality.

One of the strategic lines of action is interventions that help people at risk of food insecurity to gain physical access to nutritious food. This includes food assistance programmes to ensure that populations in emergency situations have temporary access to sufficient amounts of adequate food and nutrients, giving priority to children and pregnant women.

In addition, the Fifth Master Plan states that global challenges, such as demographic growth, rapid urbanisation and rural transformation have changed approaches and efforts to promote food security. For this reason, the main action and management challenge facing Spanish Cooperation is to rationalise geographic concentration to ensure presence, visibility and quality based on experience and comparative advantage, seeking new methods and tools in accordance with emerging needs.

The Sixth Master Plan (2024-2027) continues to reflect Spain's commitment to the 2030 Agenda and European sustainable development policy. It emphasises the need to address the triple transition, integrating social, green and economic aspects. Similarly, it ratifies the Human-Rights-Based-Approach (HRBA) from a regulatory perspective by complying with international human rights standards, and from an operational perspective by working to strengthen the capacity of partner countries, civil society, economic stakeholders and multilateral and regional bodies to implement the HRBA. It therefore seeks to foster and protect these universal, inalienable, indivisible and interdependent rights, so as to amend discriminatory practices and close gaps in equitable access to public services and decision-making spaces that limit sustainable development.

It also stresses that **social transition** requires a joint response and coordinated actions to guarantee rights. To this end, the following lines of action are outlined: (i) democratic governance; (ii) global health and health systems; (iii) food security and the fight against

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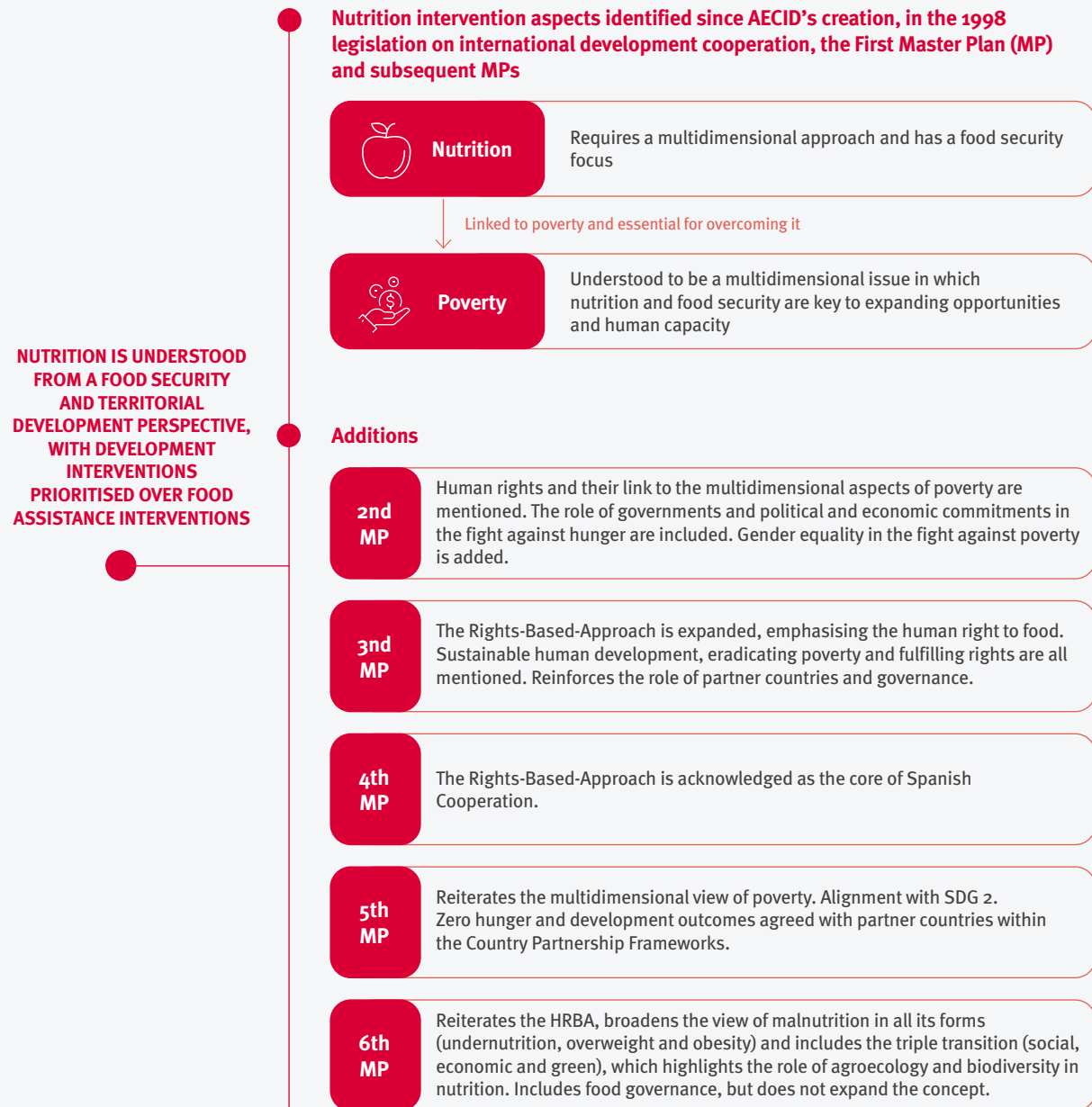
hunger; (iv) equitable, inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning; (v) gender equality and empowerment of all women, girls and adolescents; and (vi) culture and sustainable development.

The strategic **Food Security and Fighting Hunger** line of action is aligned with SDG 2 and categorically opens Spanish Cooperation's work portfolio. All forms of malnutrition are included, i.e. combating food insecurity (chronic, transitory and seasonal), fighting against obesity, overweight and undernutrition and helping fulfil the human right to adequate food. It also highlights biodiversity protection and support for agroecology, which are key elements in the triple transition, indicating that agrifood systems should enable all people to access a sustainable diet. The EC's actions therefore take on a broad view of nutrition in the current context, where including malnutrition in all its forms is absolutely essential for achieving adequate nutrition.

Furthermore, in environments that are fragile or where there is conflict, it states that food assistance or food aid programmes will be deployed, prioritising vulnerable population groups, such as children, pregnant and lactating women and the elderly, among others.

It also briefly states that actions aimed at supporting institutions to prepare national food security strategies and promoting public policies that support the human right to food should be encouraged. This is an example of governance employed to achieve the human right to food and improve the nutritional status of the population. This reflects Spanish Cooperation's commitment to strengthen food governance and a willingness to strengthen leadership in partner countries so that they can work on their own development.

Image 1. Trends in nutrition interventions - Master Plans and other AECID management tools



Acknowledging the ability of leaders in partner countries to drive their development in partnership with AECID is embodied through tools such as the Country Partnership Frameworks. These agreements are an important step towards effectiveness and they encourage ownership of the development process. From 2009 to 2012, 11 Country Partnership Frameworks were drawn up. The Sustainable Development Goals and their targets are at the centre of dialogue with countries and other stakeholders.

There are currently 15 Country Partnership Frameworks in place between Spain and the following countries: Mauritania, Niger, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Bolivia, Guatemala, Mozambique, Colombia, Jordan, Palestine, Honduras, Paraguay, Senegal and Cuba.

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The Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs) also include the nutrition priorities linked to SDG2. The Niger-Spain 2023-2027 CPF includes the objectives set by Niger to reduce severe food insecurity to 1% and chronic food insecurity to 11% by 2035. One of the development outcomes is for producers to increase their income thanks to sustainable improvements in production and productivity. An intermediate outcome is for rural producers to sustainably improve their value chain (farming, livestock, forestry and fishing products). The framework states that Spanish Cooperation will continue to support small producers to make the most of the resources and means of small and medium-sized agribusinesses and forestry and fishing operations in rural areas. It also mentions the importance of paying special attention to women.

The Niger-Spain CPF emphasizes an approach to nutrition that tackles the issues from a comprehensive rural development and food security perspective.

As well as the Sustainable Development Partnership Frameworks (formerly CPFs), there are other documents for planning Spanish Cooperation's actions. These include the Sustainable Development Alliances and the Cooperation Strategies, which are each designed to be used according to the evolution and needs of each partner country.

AECID's nutrition intervention approach and its relationship with geographic priorities:

The Master Plans very clearly set out a food security and territorial development-related nutrition approach. It is therefore important to understand that, beyond existing global undernourishment issues, such as severe undernutrition and hunger, AECID addresses nutrition in all its forms, i.e. malnutrition, and beyond addressing undernutrition alone, it prioritises the human right to food, where the key is achieving access to safe, nutritious and varied food.

AECID's area of expertise has developed as a result of several aspects, such as geographic prioritisation. Priority countries are those where the greatest volume of Spanish Cooperation resources will be concentrated. Thus, Spanish Law 1/2023 outlines geographic priorities with special attention given to North African, Middle Eastern and Sub-Saharan African countries, as well as Latin American and the Caribbean. Historically, Spanish Cooperation has had the greatest impact and experience in these geographical areas, which is why it can add value to sustainable development here. Moreover, we need to remain in these countries. Many of them are not recipients of Official Development Aid, basically due to income criteria, but they face challenges that are characteristic of development in transition. These challenges do not end when countries reach a certain level of income, as this measurement is insufficient and does not reflect the real situation in these countries.

These countries need us to look beyond a view of cooperation centred entirely on the fight against poverty through economic development, and to move towards a broader understanding of cooperation that considers inequalities, encourages global public goods (those that benefit humanity globally and are characterised by their contribution to the

quality of life, such as international security, environmental protection, peace, knowledge generation) and facilitates the transition to more sustainable development models. Spain therefore became one of the donor countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). This committee defines cooperation priorities for sustainable development with “graduated” countries, under the understanding that cooperation cannot be determined by a single indicator, such as a country's average income.

In terms of nutrition interventions, these countries require a multidimensional approach that addresses food security, nutrition and territorial development. This would deal with the structural causes of malnutrition and would broaden the approach to take on a board a variety of malnutrition issues, not just undernutrition. These demands are in line with the nutrition approaches outlined in the Master Plans, which prioritise nutrition from a territorial development perspective over food assistance.

This prioritisation does not however limit Spanish Cooperation to acting only in these countries. In partnership with the European Union, it may intervene in countries and regions of particular importance, taking into account the geographic and sectoral priorities set out in the Sixth Master Plan, as well as special cases of human rights violations in fragile contexts.

The Sixth Master Plan outlines three levels of geographic cooperation priorities:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. PRIORITY REGIONS | Latin America and the Caribbean, North Africa and the Middle East, West African and Sahel countries, and Portuguese and Spanish-speaking African countries. |
| 2. PRIORITY COUNTRIES | <p>Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.</p> <p>Sub-Saharan Africa: Cape Verde, Senegal, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique.</p> <p>North Africa and the Middle East: Morocco, Sahrawi refugees, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon.</p> <p>Asia: The Philippines</p> |
| 3. OTHER COUNTRIES OF INTEREST | Spanish Cooperation may also work in and with other non-priority countries that are part of the specified priority regions, following a detailed review on a case-by-case basis. |

KEY IDEAS IN THIS SECTION

- The Master Plans consider nutrition to be a key aspect in the fight against poverty. Poverty is understood to be a multidimensional phenomenon and therefore requires a holistic approach based on structural and long-term factors.
- AECID's action in middle-income countries has required a nutrition approach that works with nutritional factors, incorporates Right to Food approaches and which is also linked to food security.
- Interventions are most effective when there is a concerted effort, created and led by governments in coordination with civil society. This is reflected in the Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs), whereby the country's priorities are set out in a consensual manner.
- The Sixth Master Plan clearly incorporates malnutrition in all its forms as a priority for Spanish Cooperation, alongside sustainable food systems.
- Food aid plays a role in management documents, but it is not a central activity. Nutrition is prioritised within food security and rural development.

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**TRENDS IN
AECID'S NUTRITION
INTERVENTIONS
FROM A FUNDING
PERSPECTIVE**

4



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The investment trends and project types recorded in the OECD Data Explorer (DE) were analysed using the nutrition marker for activities with a principal or significant score. This includes projects with nutrition as a principal objective and projects where nutrition is not a direct objective, but it is significant. The information available in the DE on projects using the nutrition marker dates from 2018, i.e. one year after the marker was introduced, and it runs up to 2022. This reference range is therefore used for this analysis.

The “Nutrition” marker assigns two scores to projects:

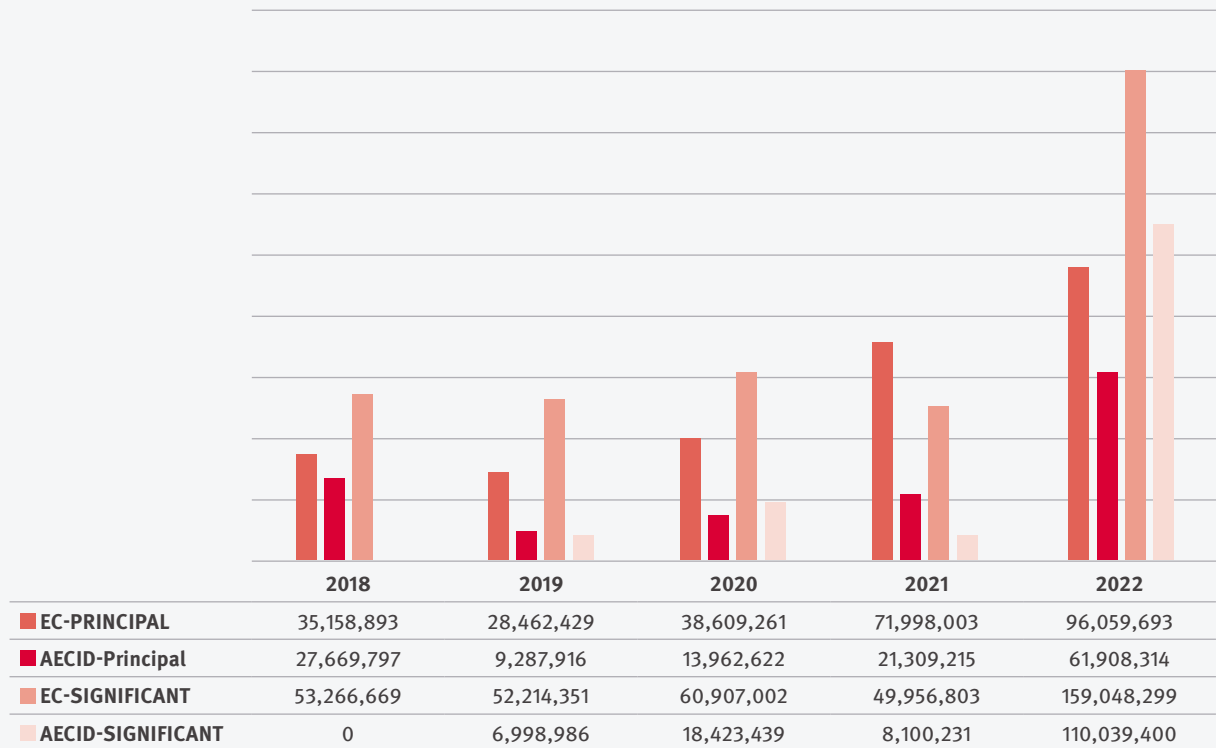
- a. Principal refers to projects whose impact on nutrition is principal and,
- b. Significant, which refers to projects whose impact on nutrition is significant.

Data were obtained from 2018 to 2022 to show AECID’s investments in nutrition projects under the principal nutrition marker score. Investment increased from 2019 to 2022, both in terms of Spain’s total investment as a member of the DAC, and also in terms of investment by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECID).

AECID's investment compared to Spain's investment was 78.7% in the base year (2018), a percentage that decreased to 29.6% and then increased to 64.4% in 2022, showing an upward trend from 2019 to 2022.

AECID's investment in projects classified under the significant nutrition marker have fluctuated from USD 0 million in 2018 to reach USD 110,039,400 in 2022. As a result, AECID's relative investment compared to Spain’s as a DAC member has followed the same fluctuating trend for this type of project, ranging from 13.4% to 69.2%.

Image 1. EC and AECID investment by principal and significant score from 2018 to 2022



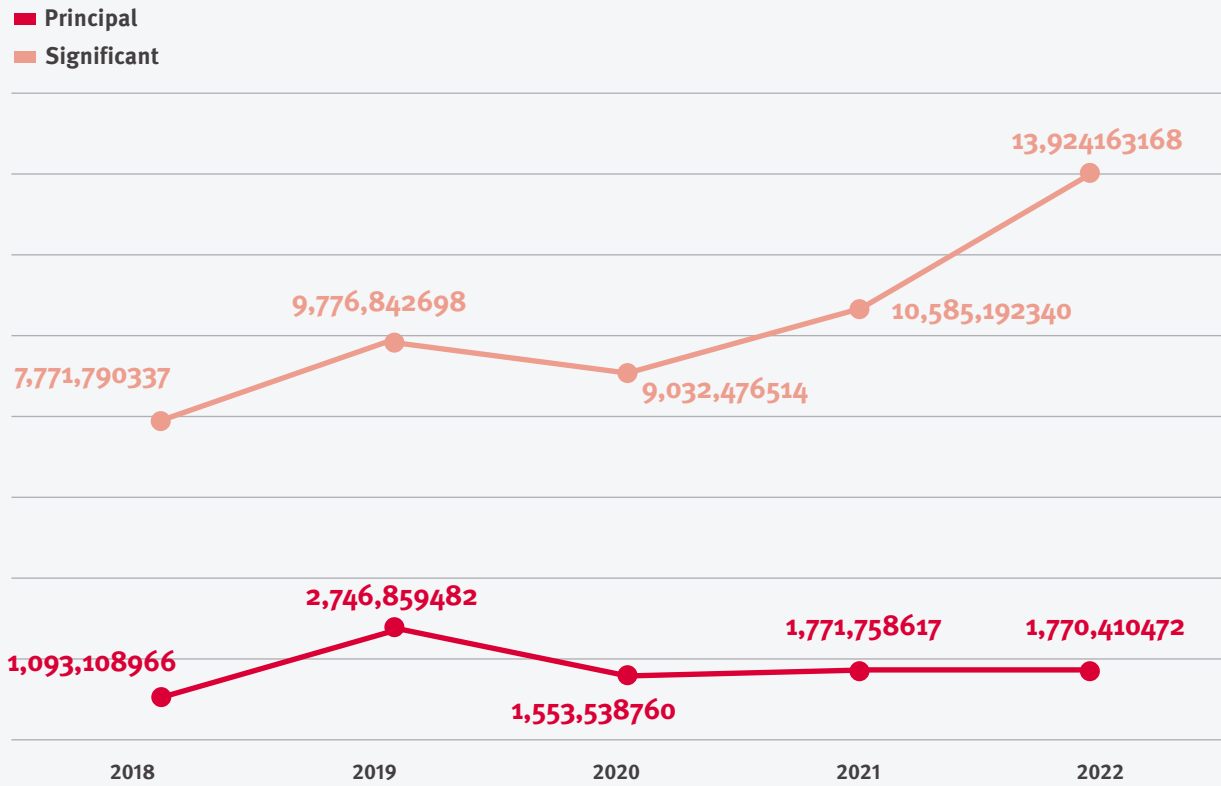
Source: Prepared using data from the OECD Data Explorer <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>

When comparing this information with data from DAC member countries in projects where the contribution to nutrition objectives is principal, we can see that investment has increased across the period analysed, from USD 1,093,108,966 in 2018 to USD 1,770,410,472 in 2022. In addition, a peak of USD 2,746,859,482 dollars can be seen in 2019, which decreases in the following years. From the base year to the last year of the period under analysis, we can see a 61% increase in investment.

Meanwhile, investment in projects with a significant contribution to nutrition has increased steeply over the period under analysis, reaching its peak in 2022 with USD 13,924,163,168, which is an increase of 79% compared to the 2018 base year. The nutrition marker is available from 2017 (a year with few records), which is why the data obtained relate to 2018 onwards. As there are no filters for classifying projects using this marker, the projects recorded under the umbrella of this marker may be overestimated.

Investment in projects with a significant contribution to nutrition is 7.8 times higher than those with a principal contribution to nutrition. In terms of AECID's figures, investment in nutrition projects with a significant score is 1.65 times higher than in projects with a principal score. This shows a higher relative investment by AECID in projects where the objectives are mainly of a nutritional nature.

Image 2. Total investment of DAC member countries in projects included under the nutrition marker by principal and significant score



Source: Prepared using data from the OECD Data Explorer <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>

Moreover, the main recipient countries of nutrition projects, taking into account the principal marker, are Mozambique, Guatemala, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Honduras, El Salvador, Haiti and Cuba (excluding Ukraine); countries that have been recipients of nutrition projects financed by AECID.

A detailed look at the investments can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Main recipient countries of AECID-funded nutrition projects with a principal score

| RECIPIENT COUNTRY | 2018 | | 2019 | | 2020 | | 2021 | | 2022 | | TOTAL FROM 2018 TO 2022 | TOTAL % FROM 2018 TO 2022 |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| | MILLIONS USD RECEIVED | % USD RECEIVED | MILLIONS USD RECEIVED | % USD RECEIVED | MILLIONS USD RECEIVED | % USD RECEIVED | MILLIONS USD RECEIVED | % USD RECEIVED | MILLIONS USD RECEIVED | % USD RECEIVED | | |
| Ukraine | | | | | | | | | 13,671,258 | 30.10% | 13,671,258 | 13.53% |
| Mozambique | 5,767,681 | 20.84% | 0,801,642 | 10% | 0,567,765 | 4.85% | 0,391,680 | 4.86% | 3,996,215 | 8.80% | 11,524,983 | 11.41% |
| Guatemala | 6,690,511 | 24.18% | 1,593,879 | 20% | 0,562,143 | 4.80% | 0,317,607 | 3.94% | 1,472,290 | 3.24% | 10,636,430 | 10.53% |
| Senegal | 2,883,840 | 10.42% | 1,174,211 | 14% | 2,061,163 | 17.60% | 0,766,227 | 9.50% | 3,154,907 | 6.95% | 10,040,348 | 9.94% |
| Mali | 3,676,242 | 13.29% | 1,397,941 | 17% | 0,505,930 | 4.32% | | | 0,877,898 | 1.93% | 6,458,011 | 6.39% |
| Niger | | | 1,080,225 | 13% | 1,908,343 | 16.29% | 0,657,117 | 8.15% | 1,314,544 | 2.89% | 4,960,229 | 4.91% |
| Honduras | 2,883,841 | 10.42% | 0,284,270 | 3% | 1,089,186 | 9.30% | | | 0,524,087 | 1.15% | 4,781,384 | 4.73% |
| El Salvador | | | 0,211,055 | 3% | 0,224,857 | 1.92% | 1,047,821 | 12.99% | 3,154,905 | 6.95% | 4,638,638 | 4.59% |
| Haiti | | | 0,454,832 | 6% | 1,478,749 | 12.62% | 0,493,779 | 6.12% | 1,998,107 | 4.40% | 4,425,467 | 4.38% |
| Cuba | | | | | 0,528,416 | 4.51% | 0,351,334 | 4.36% | 3,154,905 | 6.95% | 4,034,655 | 3.99% |
| Morocco | | | 0,244,491 | 3% | | | 0,305,016 | 3.78% | 3,312,652 | 7.29% | 3,862,159 | 3.82% |
| Ethiopia | 2,883,841 | 10.42% | | | 0,309,179 | 2.64% | 0,615,374 | 7.63% | | | 3,808,394 | 3.77% |
| Venezuela | | | | | | | | | 3,785,780 | 8.33% | 3,785,780 | 3.75% |
| Mauritania | | | | | 2,012,754 | 17.18% | 0,980,578 | 12.16% | 0,539,243 | 1.19% | 3,532,575 | 3.50% |
| Syria | | | | | | | | | 3,154,905 | 6.95% | 3,154,905 | 3.12% |
| Peru | 2,883,841 | 10.42% | | | | | | | | | 2,883,841 | 2.85% |
| Ecuador | | | | | | | 0,560,059 | 6.94% | 0,381,800 | 0.84% | 0,941,859 | 0.93% |
| Colombia | | | 0,302,726 | 4% | | | | | 0,557,367 | 1.23% | 0,860,093 | 0.85% |
| Cape Verde | | | 0,468,670 | 6% | | | 0,320,294 | 3.97% | | | 0,788,964 | 0.78% |
| Bolivia | | | 0,144,776 | 2% | 0,231,515 | 1.98% | | | 0,373,330 | 0.82% | 0,749,621 | 0.74% |
| Paraguay | | | | | | | 0,711,878 | 8.83% | | | 0,711,878 | 0.70% |
| Philippines | | | | | | | 0,383,237 | 4.75% | | | 0,383,237 | 0.38% |
| Dominican Republic | | | | | 0,234,047 | 2.00% | | | | | 0,234,047 | 0.23% |
| Brazil | | | | | | | 0,164,279 | 2.04% | | | 0,164,279 | 0.16% |
| Overall total | 27,669,797 | 100.00% | 8,158,718 | 100% | 11,714,047 | 100.00% | 8,066,280 | 100.00% | 45,424,193 | 100.00% | 101,033,035 | 100.00% |

Source: Prepared using data from the OECD Data Explorer <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>

It is of the utmost importance to state that the investment figures recorded in the OECD Data Explorer for AECID do not take into account other significant contributions made in the field of nutrition, such as financing of the Parliamentary Fronts within the framework of the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative, or financing of the FAO Human Right to Food Office. These significant contributions have a huge impact on and provide sustainability in the fight against hunger and the effort to improve nutrition.

In addition, these contributions are very cost-effective. They have a strong impact on global, national and regional public policy that arises out of the needs of the countries, driven by the stakeholders themselves and facilitated by AECID.

NUTRITION INTERVENTION TRENDS FROM 2002 TO 2017

Since the nutrition marker information is available from 2018 to 2022, the “Basic Nutrition” sub-sector within the “Health” heading was used to identify AECID’s investment in nutrition projects. An upward trend can therefore be seen in AECID’s investment in basic nutrition projects from 2002 to 2008, when it reached its peak in the period under analysis.

From 2009 to 2017, investment decreased and in 2013, AECID had zero investment in basic nutrition projects.

Table 2. AECID’S investment from 2002 to 2017 using the “Basic Nutrition” sub-sector

| YEAR | AECID INVESTMENT | EC TOTAL | % OF AECID INVESTMENT |
|------|------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 2002 | 0,295,114 | 6,015,592 | 5% |
| 2003 | 2,564,488 | 5,055,248 | 51% |
| 2004 | 3,326,483 | 3,326,483 | 100% |
| 2005 | 1,622,780 | 3,762,871 | 43% |
| 2006 | 2,481,814 | 5,483,105 | 45% |
| 2007 | 35,137,191 | 37,669,119 | 93% |
| 2008 | 42,713,829 | 47,629.86 | 90% |
| 2009 | 4.8187.210 | 10,262,313 | 47% |
| 2010 | 8.7409.570 | 14,898,169 | 59% |
| 2011 | 6,386,902 | 11,427,929 | 56% |
| 2012 | 2,181,050 | 4,883,348 | 45% |
| 2013 | 0 | 2,102,778 | 0% |
| 2014 | 2,148,048 | 5,012,925 | 43% |
| 2015 | 4,767,269 | 6,923,796 | 69% |
| 2016 | 2,812,478 | 5,597,007 | 50% |
| 2017 | 2,884,992 | 6,753,795 | 43% |

Source: OECD. Data Explorer. <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>

When looking at the 2018 to 2022 data provided under the “Nutrition” marker, we can see greater investment with annual totals ranging from USD 27 million to USD 61 million when only the principal category within the marker is taken into consideration.

The two periods cannot however be compared, as the “basic nutrition” sub-sector falls under the “health” heading and it is possible that only nutrition projects linked to the health sector have been recorded and not those linked to other sectors, such as agriculture, welfare or gender.

TYPES OF SPANISH COOPERATION-FUNDED NUTRITION PROJECTS FROM 2002-2022

This section provides an analysis of AECID-funded projects in the “Basic Nutrition” sector (2002-2017) and using the new basic nutrition marker (2018-2022). During this period, 13 types of AECID-funded projects have been found, although it is important to note that projects sometimes overlap between one type and another:

- c. Food security and food sovereignty projects
- d. Projects to combat child undernutrition
- e. Projects on nutrition education and promoting healthy habits
- f. Projects to strengthen health and nutrition systems
- g. Emergency nutrition intervention projects
- h. Projects on nutrition research and studies
- i. Projects to support the production and marketing of nutritious foods
- j. Multi-sectoral nutrition projects
- k. Projects to empower women in food security and nutrition issues
- l. Climate change adaptation projects
- m. Humanitarian aid projects in crisis contexts
- n. Projects to improve water resource management
- o. Territorial and community development projects

Table 3. Types of AECID-funded projects from 2002 to 2022

| NO. | PROJECT | KEYWORDS | DESCRIPTION | EXAMPLES |
|-----|--|--|---|---|
| 1 | Food security and food sovereignty projects | "food security", "food sovereignty", "agricultural production", "food resilience", "right to food" | These projects focus on ensuring a population's access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. They include initiatives to improve local food production, strengthen food systems and empower communities to make decisions about their food. They also address food resilience when faced with crises and climate change. | <p>"Food and nutrition security and promoting health in rural populations in Bolivia and Peru."</p> <p>"A sovereignty-led approach to improving food and nutrition security, fostering gender equity (Presto, Chuquisaca (Bolivia))."</p> <p>"FAO 2021 Support for the Hunger-Free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative 2025 during Covid-19."</p> <p>"BLUE PLANET: Strengthening coastal and river communities' resilience in the Blue Planet islands."</p> <p>"Territorial development of the Food Sovereignty and Nutrition Education Plan in 5 municipal areas in Cuba."</p> <p>"2022 FAO Hunger-Free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative during Covid-19"</p> |
| 2 | Projects to combat child undernutrition | "chronic undernutrition", "child malnutrition", "maternal and child nutrition" | These projects focus specifically on combating child undernutrition, with a particular focus on early childhood and pregnant women. They include direct nutrition interventions, nutrition supplements, monitoring of child growth and development and encouraging appropriate food practices. | <p>"The fight against child undernutrition in priority areas within the Guatemalan department of Chiquimula: Nutritional recovery centre."</p> <p>"2018 GT Acción contra el Hambre, Helping prevent chronic child undernutrition using a comprehensive model."</p> <p>"Guatemala. 2021 ISIS, Strengthening primary health care and the networking strategy to help provide comprehensive care and reduce undernutrition in Guatemala and the department of Sololá. 2021."</p> <p>"Building fair and resilient community environments in Camotán, Guatemala."</p> <p>"GT 2022 ISIS, Strengthening primary health care in Sololá, year 2."</p> <p>"Actúa Chiquimula: Fighting child undernutrition through community action and technological solutions, Stage II."</p> |
| 3 | Projects on nutrition education and promoting healthy habits | "nutrition education", "healthy habits", "training", "awareness-raising" | The focus of these projects is to disseminate knowledge about nutrition and to encourage healthy eating practices. They include training programmes, awareness-raising campaigns and educational activities targeting different population groups to improve eating habits and long-term nutritional status. | <p>"Training on food security and maternal and child nutrition for holders, guarantors and duty bearers of the right to food in URR (Gambia)."</p> <p>"BEYDARI-KOLDA - Improving the food and nutritional situation of the most vulnerable in the Kolda region."</p> <p>"Haiti 2021 - FOIE ET JOIE HAITI. Improving education quality."</p> <p>"Turer b'ixirar inb'utz (Living well)"</p> |

| NO. | PROJECT | KEYWORDS | DESCRIPTION | EXAMPLES |
|-----|--|---|--|--|
| 4 | Projects to strengthen health and nutrition systems | "institutional strengthening", "local capacities", "health systems" | These projects aim to improve the capacity of health systems and local institutions so that they can tackle nutritional problems. They include policy development, training of health personnel, improving infrastructure and rolling out nutrition programmes at institutional and community level. | <p>"Health and nutrition, strengthening implementation of the community model of family health through an interculturality lens."</p> <p>"Improving health conditions and the sanitation system by fostering the right to access water, hygiene and sanitation in Sikasso."</p> <p>"Health and food security in San Marcos: building resilience in vulnerable communities."</p> <p>"Improving universal access to health, fostering fulfilment of the right to a life free of violence."</p> <p>"Improving the quality, coverage and resilience of the Cabo Delgado health system"</p> |
| 5 | Emergency nutrition intervention projects | "nutritional rehabilitation", "food assistance", "food emergency" | These projects provide a rapid response to severe nutritional crises, such as famine or natural disasters. They include distributing emergency food, treating severe acute malnutrition, and setting up therapeutic feeding centres. | <p>"Niger. Response to the food emergency. Treating severe acute undernutrition and building resilience."</p> <p>"Increasing resilience to food and nutrition insecurity for the vulnerable displaced and refugee population of Tillia."</p> <p>"2021 IOM Venezuela Crisis - Region and Venezuela."</p> <p>"Emergency food delivery and strengthening the preparedness and response capacity."</p> <p>"Mali 2022 Emergency food aid in central Mali, WFP."</p> |
| 6 | Projects on nutrition research and studies | "research", "studies", "nutritional transition" | These projects focus on generating scientific knowledge about nutrition and food. They include epidemiological studies, research on specific foods and nutrients and analyses of nutritional trends in different populations and contexts. | <p>"PCI. Population and genetic aspects and nutritional transition in the Argentine Northwest."</p> <p>"PCI. Bioactive peptides and gene expression of proteins in lipid metabolism."</p> |
| 7 | Projects to support the production and marketing of nutritious foods | "local production", "marketing", "value chain", "family farming" | These projects aim to improve the availability and accessibility of nutritious foods by strengthening local production and distribution systems. They include sustainable agriculture initiatives, improving food value chains and supporting small-scale producers and retailers. | <p>"Increasing the availability of good quality and affordable fish for the rural population in South-East Haiti."</p> <p>"Strengthening local food sovereignty by developing sustainable family farming in G Chantier G Village, Poder (Senegal)."</p> <p>"Ensuring the right to fresh local food for vulnerable families through sustainable vegetable gardens."</p> <p>"Sustainable agriculture, horticulture, forestry and fruit-growing capacity."</p> <p>"Linking the circular economy and the Big Market to improve operations and sustainability."</p> |

| NO. | PROJECT | KEYWORDS | DESCRIPTION | EXAMPLES |
|-----|---|---|--|--|
| 8 | Multi-sectoral nutrition projects | "multi-sectoral approach", "comprehensive", "cross-sector" | These projects take a holistic approach to nutrition, acknowledging the links between nutrition and other sectors, such as farming, health, education and the environment. They include coordinated interventions across multiple areas to achieve a broader and more sustainable impact on the nutritional status of the population. | "Assistance with the multi-sectoral action plan to reduce chronic undernutrition." "Improving living standards and food security through climate change-resilient green agricultural development in Cabo Delgado." "FAO 2021 The right to food and long-term response to Covid-19." "FAO 2022 The Right to Food." "INTERCOONECTA 2022 Guatemala - A public-private partnership for a swift recovery from the impact of Covid." |
| 9 | Projects on women's empowerment in food security and nutrition issues | "female empowerment", "gender equality", "economic participation" | The focus of these projects is the key role of women in food security and nutrition, fostering their economic, social and political empowerment. They include initiatives to improve women's access to productive resources, training in leadership and decision-making, and fostering gender equality in food security policies. | "Economic and political empowerment of indigenous Nasa women in the municipal area of Toribio (Cauca, Colombia)." "Contributing to the right to food and gender equality in La Libertad and Zaragoza." "MAURIFEM: Guaranteeing the rights of women and food security during the Covid-19 pandemic." "Supporting the resilience and empowerment of women and young people in Maradi, Niger following Covid-19." "LEAD: Protecting the DA, fostering female leadership and economic development in indigenous mountain communities and Oriental Mindoro, the Philippines." |
| 10 | Climate change and food resilience adaptation projects | "climate change", "resilience", "adaptation", "sustainability" | These projects address the challenges posed by climate change to food and nutrition security. Strategies include adapting farming systems to changing climate conditions, promoting resilient and sustainable agricultural practices, and strengthening the capacity of communities to deal with the impacts of climate change on their food security. | "ARAUCLIMA 2019 food security ICC adaptation to climate change." "Increasing resilience to the pastoral crisis in pastoral/farming populations in the communes of Koussane Djelbou and Sahel." "FAO 2021 Water and food security in Africa-IESA." "FAO 2022 Water and food security in Africa initiative: Supporting pastoral communities and pastors to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and to guarantee a means to live in West Africa." |
| 11 | Projects on humanitarian aid in crisis contexts | "humanitarian aid", "protection", "crisis", "emergency" | These projects provide food and nutrition aid in humanitarian crises, including conflict, natural disasters and forced displacement. They focus on immediate food and nutrition needs in emergency contexts. | "Humanitarian aid and international protection activities for the Sahrawi refugee population." "Assistance and protection for the population affected by emergencies and acute crises through multi-sectoral aid." "Early recovery in Syria: multi-sectoral response to access basic services and media." |

| NO. | PROJECT | KEYWORDS | DESCRIPTION | EXAMPLES |
|-----|--|--|--|--|
| 12 | Projects to improve water resource management | "water management", "sanitation", "hygiene", "water resources" | These projects focus on improving water access and management, acknowledging the fundamental importance they have on nutrition and health. They include initiatives to improve water supply, sanitation and hygiene and to foster sustainable management of water resources in relation to food security. | "Improving public and social management for the governance of water resources in 9 municipal areas in the Fonseca region." "Strengthening the water, sanitation and hygiene approach in the Gaza Strip." |
| 13 | Territorial and community development projects | "territorial development", "communities", "local participation", "sustainable development" | These projects tackle nutrition and food security from a comprehensive territorial development perspective, involving local communities in the planning and execution of initiatives. They seek to strengthen local capacities and promote sustainable development that improves nutrition and the population's quality of life. | "Colombia. 2022. Local development project for peace in the department of Cauca." "Fishing and farming communities in El Salvador as protagonists of their socioeconomic, sustainable and inclusive development and resilient food security." |

Source: Prepared using data from the OECD Data Explorer <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>

EVOLUTION OVER TIME OF PROJECT TYPES

In accordance with type, below are details of the evolution of AECID-funded nutrition projects.

- 1. Food security and food sovereignty projects:** These projects have been a constant over time, but their frequency and complexity increased from 2008-2010. A growing emphasis on food sovereignty and food resilience can be seen in the most recent years (2014-2022), with a greater focus on the right to food and community participation. From 2021 to 2022, greater attention is paid to food security in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2. Projects to combat child undernutrition:** There has been a considerable rise in this type of project since 2008, with a significant peak between 2012 and 2022. There is a trend towards more comprehensive and long-term interventions, with a growing focus on the prevention of chronic undernutrition. In recent years (2020 to 2022), community-based approaches and technological solutions have taken centre-stage.
- 3. Projects on nutrition education and the promotion of healthy habits:** This type of project dates back to the very beginning, but they have become more sophisticated and broader reaching since 2010, with an increasing focus on the capacity of local staff and integration with other sectors, such as education. From 2018 to 2022, we can see an increased focus on community awareness-raising and the promotion of varied diets, as well as the inclusion of cultural aspects to nutrition education

4. Projects to **strengthen health and nutrition systems**: There has been a notable increase in this type of project since 2010, with greater interest in strengthening institutions and incorporating nutrition into health systems. In recent years (2018 to 2022), we can see a trend towards a more holistic approach that includes access to water and sanitation, as well as the resilience of health systems to tackle crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic.
5. **Emergency nutrition intervention** projects: These projects have been consistent over time, but there has been an increase in their frequency and scale since 2008, possibly in response to global food crises. Lately (2018 to 2022), greater emphasis has been placed on resilience and linking emergency aid to longer-term development, as well as a swifter and more coordinated response to crises such as the one in Venezuela.
6. Projects on **nutrition research and studies**: There has been a gradual increase in this type of project since 2009-2010, with a growing focus on topics such as nutritional transition and population and genetic issues. In recent years, although less frequent, these projects tend to be more specific and targeted at the practical application of research results.
7. Projects to **support the production and marketing of nutritious foods**: These projects have gained importance since 2010, with an increasing focus on crop diversification, local production and food value chains. From 2018 to 2022, more attention is paid to family farming, promoting nutritious local foods and the circular economy in food systems.
8. **Multi-sectoral nutrition** projects: There has been a clear trend towards this type of project since 2014-2015, reflecting a growing recognition of the need to address nutrition across multiple sectors. This trend continued and grew from 2018 to 2022, with an increasing emphasis on public-private partnerships and incorporating nutrition across various development sectors.
9. Projects to **empower women in food security and nutrition issues**: While there has been a gender-focussed approach to many projects over the years, there has been a significant increase in projects specifically targeting female empowerment within the context of food security and nutrition since 2015, with a notable increase from 2018 to 2022. These projects have developed to include aspects of community-based female economic and political leadership.
10. **Climate change adaptation** projects: This type of project has gained traction since 2012, with a significant increase from 2018 to 2022. This reflects a growing concern for the impact of climate change on food security and nutrition. We can see a trend towards more comprehensive approaches that combine climate change adaptation with community resilience and food security.
11. **Humanitarian aid projects in crisis contexts**: This type of project has been repeated throughout the period with an increase in complexity and scope being observed in recent years (2018 to 2022). There is a trend towards a more holistic response, combining food assistance with other areas of humanitarian aid, and a growing emphasis on linking humanitarian aid and longer-term development.

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12. Projects to improve **water resource management**: Although they have been part of our work since the outset, these projects have gained prominence since 2015, with greater attention paid to the link between water, sanitation and nutrition. In recent years (2018 to 2022), these projects have been integrated with food security and climate change adaptation initiatives.
13. **Territorial and community development** projects: This approach has gained prominence in the last few years (2018 to 2022), reflecting a trend towards more holistic and localised approaches to food security and nutrition. There is a growing emphasis on the role of local communities and on linking nutrition to wider territorial development processes.

Generally speaking, there is a change from simpler and more targeted projects in the early years (2002 to 2007) to more complex, comprehensive and multi-sectoral interventions in more recent years (2014 to 2022). There is also an increased focus on sustainability, resilience, local capacity building, female empowerment and climate change adaptation over time. The most recent projects tend to integrate multiple approaches and deal with food and nutrition security more holistically, taking into account factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change and complex humanitarian crises.

KEY IDEAS IN THIS SECTION

- For countries such as Spain, for Spanish Cooperation in general and for AECID, there is increased investment in projects recorded using the nutrition marker with a principal score in the OECD Data Explorer from 2019 to 2022.
- Investment in projects that make a significant contribution to nutrition is 7.8 higher than for projects with a principal score. When comparing this figure with AECID's figures, investment in nutrition projects with a significant score is 1.65 times higher than those with a principal score.
- When taking into account the principal score, the main recipient countries of nutrition projects are Mozambique, Guatemala, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Honduras, El Salvador, Haiti and Cuba.
- The AECID investment figures recorded in the OECD Data Explorer do not take into account other significant contributions to nutrition made by AECID, such as funding for the Parliamentary Fronts within the framework of the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative, or funding for the FAO Human Right to Food Office. These important contributions have a huge impact and provide sustainability in the fight against hunger and the effort to improve nutrition.
- An analysis of project type shows a progression from simpler and more targeted projects in the early years (2002 to 2007) to more complex, comprehensive and multi-sectoral interventions in the last few years (2014 to 2022). We can also see a greater focus on sustainability, resilience, local capacity building, female empowerment and climate change adaptation over time. More recent projects tend to integrate multiple approaches and deal with food and nutrition security more holistically, taking into account factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change and complex humanitarian crises.



**AN INNOVATIVE
APPROACH
TO NUTRITION:
THE PARLIAMENTARY
FRONTS**

5

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The Parliamentary Fronts were chosen as a relevant case study, as this experience within the Latin American and Caribbean region can help strengthen governance in nutrition.

5.1. PARLIAMENTARY FRONTS AGAINST HUNGER IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean arose within the framework of the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative (HFLACI), which was set up in 2005 as part of a Latin American Summit on nutrition held in Guatemala. This group was supported by the then President of Guatemala and Brazil, where the countries committed to eradicate hunger by 2025. Following the setting up of this initiative, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), in partnership with FAO, responded quickly. This alliance gave its commitment to support the initiative, providing technical and financial assistance to put in place the necessary processes and means to tackle nutrition from the region's executive powers, thus putting it on the agenda.

The AECID - FAO alliance is a solid union and a technical and financial synergy, based on the work carried out by AECID in a number of projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. This has lent legitimacy and notable technical quality to the alliance, which in recent years has been joined by Mexican Cooperation.

The HFLACI integrated several elements: the inclusion of nutrition on the national agenda, support for legal frameworks and policy documents within the framework of the Human Right to Food, the Parliamentary Fronts, the mobilisation of chefs and public figures and work with academia. Over time, investment in the agenda and other components has dropped, leaving two central areas of work: the Parliamentary Fronts and work with academia. Funding for parliamentary work has increased, albeit modestly, as €700,000 are currently invested annually. There is a high return on investment, as it has a direct and real impact on public policy.

The Parliamentary Front Against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean (PFH-LAC) was set up in 2009 and brought together parliamentarians from different parties, regardless of their political leanings, in a progressive and strong grouping. The outcomes are seen today and unite parliamentarians from the region, who play a key role in food and nutrition issues.

Some support and momentum for legislative transformation had already been seen before the PFH-LAC was set up. Within the framework of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) financed by AECID and rolled out by FAO, institutional frameworks had been created to support food and nutrition security work. Guatemala was the first country to have a Food and Nutrition Security Law in 2004. Later on, the 2009 Food and Nutrition Security Law was passed in Nicaragua.

Meanwhile, in 2007, the Brazilian Parliamentary Front for Food and Nutrition Security was established, setting a benchmark for the creation of the regional Parliamentary Front. The open-minded attitude demonstrated by AECID and FAO to work on innovative experiences and proposals that were emerging in the region enabled new ideas to be incorporated and provided greater flexibility to International Cooperation in the implementing of this transformative initiative. Working with legislative powers in Latin America and the Caribbean was the catalyst for generating a new and different energy in terms of improving food and nutrition.

Following the launch of the Latin American and Caribbean PFH at the regional level, Parliamentary Fronts were created at the national parliament level in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in the regional parliaments (PARLACEN - Central American Parliament, PARLATINO - Latin American and Caribbean Parliament, PARLANDINO - Andean Parliament of the Andean Community, PARLASUR - Parliament of Mercosur and FOPREL - Forum of the Presidents of Legislative Powers of Central America and the Caribbean). There are twenty-six in total. The creation of these Fronts has been key to understanding that improved food and nutrition requires action at the political level to put in place legal frameworks and allocate budgets. This is why parliamentarians are the natural choice for this role, as they have the legal tools and authority to approve budgets, control the government and draft and pass specific legislation.

The Fronts have gained a cross-cutting perspective from their membership of various strategic committees, such as: International Development Cooperation; health and social services; agriculture, food and the environment. This adds strength to the holistic vision required to address food nutrition and security.

One of the strategies used to work with the Parliamentary Fronts has been the holding of in-person annual forums, where experiences are exchanged, the Fronts are given visibility and new groupings are given encouragement to set themselves up. Each of the forums that have been held has created its own identity and made its own progress and they have also been open to parliamentarians from other continents taking part; African parliamentarians were invited to the third forum for the very first time. Alongside the forums, planning meetings have also been held since 2013. These meetings lend support to the planning meetings of the extended Coordinating Committee of the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger and they also involve training and provide a space for parliamentarians and their advisors to exchange experiences. The issues addressed within these spaces include: institutionalising food and nutrition security, including the right to food in national constitutions, combating food waste, school meals, driving family farming and public procurement, healthy eating environments, front-of-pack nutrition labelling, child-friendly advertising, regulatory measures on sugary drinks and other unhealthy products, the levelling-up of women's rights to land ownership, and promoting policies to support rural women, etc.

The fourth meeting saw the formalisation of relations between legislators and academia with an agreement between the PFH and the Right to Food for Latin America and the Caribbean Law Observatory (ODA ALC). This union generates scientific evidence to back



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up legislation, thus lending support to the actions of legislators. It also guides food and nutrition research, with academia and the law jointly addressing a critical issue that requires the involvement of multiple actors.

In addition to these actions, there has been a wide range of online courses on topics such as: i) food and nutrition security policies in Latin America and the Caribbean; ii) communication and knowledge for decision-making in food and nutrition security in Latin America; iii) an online diploma in food and nutrition security methodology; iv) promoting the use of healthy food; a course on public food and nutrition security policies and the right to food. These courses are provided by the Public Policy Training Centre.

One of the key milestones was the First Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition, held in October 2018 at the headquarters of the Spanish Senate in Madrid. Over 200 members of parliament from 80 countries attended.

As a follow-up to this summit, virtual parliamentary dialogues on “Food Security and Nutrition during Covid-19” were held in 2021, organised by FAO with the support of AECID.

Impact of the Parliamentary Fronts:

The Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean have achieved a great deal on the basis that parliamentarians’ role is three-fold: legislative, control and oversight, and approving public budgets and expenditure structure.

26 Parliamentary Fronts have been set up in Latin America and the Caribbean. The issue of food and nutrition has found its place on congressional agendas and legislation on several aspects of nutrition and food security has been approved. In other words, a comprehensive understanding of the issue of nutrition and its key determining factors has been achieved. AECID's commitment to the right to food and food and nutrition security has been key in achieving this. Firstly, this commitment has ensured that food is considered from a legal perspective and secondly, it has provided a multidimensional understanding of nutrition. In addition, the link with FAO has provided technical input to the work with the Parliamentary Fronts.

This has undoubtedly made it possible to switch from a hunger-based approach to addressing poor nutrition to a more holistic way, integrating other issues and key elements linked to food systems and environments.

Likewise, laws have been put in place to tackle nutrition labels on food. This shows that nutrition actions are no longer limited by default to just malnutrition interventions, such as treating chronic or acute undernutrition or hidden hunger. Instead, actions that have been under-addressed by cooperation initiatives to combat excess malnutrition, such as overweight, obesity and nutrition problems, have also been introduced. Each of these legal provisions has a crucial impact on the food and nutrition of citizens.

The table below includes some of these specific laws:

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK - FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

- Framework law, "The right to food, food security and sovereignty" (PARLATINO).
- Law on food and nutrition security, 2011 (Honduras).
- Nicaraguan law on food sovereignty and food and nutrition security, 2009, (Nicaragua).
- Law on sovereignty, food and nutrition security and the right to food of Paraguay (Paraguay).
- Law on food and nutrition security of Peru, 2015 (Peru).
- Law 589-16 on sovereignty and food and nutrition security for the right to food (Dominican Republic).

LEGISLATION ON SPECIFIC FAMILY FARMING/AGROECOLOGY ISSUES

- Model law on family farming (PARLATINO).
- Law 27,118: Historical reparation of family farming for the reconstruction of a new rurality in Argentina (Argentina).
- Family farming law. January 2020 (Panama).
- Law to create a national family farming system (Paraguay).
- Law 30355 on promoting and developing family farming, 2015 (Peru).
- Organic law on rural lands and ancestral territories, 2016 (Ecuador).

COMBATING FOOD WASTE

- Law No. 27454 – "National plan to reduce food loss and waste" (2018) (Argentina).
- Law 1990. Preventing food loss and waste (2019) (Colombia).
- Law No. 188 on promoting food donations (2019) (El Salvador).

SCHOOL MEALS

Framework legislation on school meals (PARLATINO).
 School meals legislation within the framework of food sovereignty and the plural economy (Bolivia).
 Law 11.497 on the national school meals programme, 2009 (Brazil).
 Organic law on school meals, 2020 (Ecuador).
 Legislation on glass of milk at school programme, 2013 (El Salvador).
 School meals legislation (Guatemala).
 School meals legislation (Honduras).
 School meals legislation (Paraguay).
 Law promoting healthy meals in schools, 2013 (Uruguay).

FOOD LABELLING

Law on promoting healthy eating (Bolivia).
 Law No. 20,606 on the nutritional composition of food and advertising 2015 (Chile).
 Official regulation No. 134 on labelling of processed foods for consumption (Ecuador).
 Modification of the general health law on overweight, obesity and labelling of food and non-alcoholic beverages.
 Labelling law, 5 November 2019 (Mexico).
 Law 30021 on promoting healthy eating for children and adolescents, 2013 (Peru).
 Decree No. 272/018 modifying the national bromatological regulation regarding food labelling (Uruguay).

OTHER

Law on loans for women, 2015 (Honduras).
 Law on installing lactation rooms (Uruguay)
 Constitutional amendment recognising the right to food, modification of articles 4 and 27 of the Constitution, 2011 (Mexico).

Source: AECID. Parliamentary Fronts -Insights

One of the impacts is to place the nutritional status of the population at the very centre of law making, renewing its focus and aligning it with the human right to food. For several decades, for example, school meals have been a daily and common task in several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean as a result of legislation and programmes focussing on maximising food costs. Currently, however, the legislation on school meals takes a nutrition approach, completely transforming the school meal objectives, integrating menus reviewed by nutritionists that include local purchases.

This alternative legal perspective results in a political and legislative environment that is beneficial to nutrition.

Likewise, the work of parliamentarians through the PFHs clearly demonstrates the involvement of one of the three branches of government power and the ability of AECID, in partnership with FAO, to influence its duties within the framework of food and nutrition, achieving political consensus.

Another of the impacts achieved is indirectly strengthening democracy by bringing together parliamentarians from different groups around a shared objective and legislation to improve the food and nutrition of citizens, demonstrating the power of negotiation between various parties, and reinforcing the benefits of dialogue. The risk

of partisan politics has been overcome, as the fronts have backed diverse platforms and maintained a technical role, thus moving away from biased opinions.

The relationship between parliamentarians and academia has also been given a boost. This requires ongoing support and feedback to generate academic research that leads to viable evidence and policies on food and nutrition. A stronger dialogue between academics and politicians is also required. What is more, involving academia in the task of generating data that can be translated into policy legitimises the policy process, and academia's contribution to solving public problems is bolstered. As a result of the work with the field of academia, the Right to Food in Latin America and the Caribbean Observatory was created. This involves universities from 10 South American countries, 5 Mesoamerican countries and 2 Caribbean countries. In total, 100 universities take part to work on developing public policies that guarantee the human right to adequate food. Studies, indicators and recommendations are produced that can be extremely useful when developing, implementing and monitoring legislation and/or public policy at the local, national or regional level.

The work undertaken with the Parliamentary Fronts is an innovative example of structured cooperation work where ongoing contact is created with stakeholders who traditionally haven't been very involved in nutrition projects up until this point. In the 15 plus years that this work has been going on, a number of lessons have been learnt and strategies developed that lead to committed and effective actions by these stakeholders.

Working with parliamentarians encourages food and nutrition policies to be written by the political decision-makers themselves. This is beneficial to development and enables the protagonists to assess their own needs and build them into the legislation. This intervention strengthens institutions, capacity building and internal policy decisions and moves away from imposed interventions, encouraging internal planning involving advisors and creating spaces where dialogue is welcomed.



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The far-reaching experience with the Parliamentary Fronts has transcended Latin America and the Caribbean and has served as a platform for “South-North” cooperation. Conversations have sought to support capacity-building activities for parliamentarians and to contribute to ongoing policy dialogue processes in every region of the world, not only in Latin America. In 2016, a Parliamentary Alliance for the Right to Food was created in the European Parliament and that same year saw the launch of the Pan-African Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (PAPA-FSN), to name a few examples.

The Spanish Parliamentary Alliance for the Right to Food was also formed in 2018, signed by 197 members of parliament and relaunched in March 2021 in the Spanish Senate. The alliance brings visibility to mutual cooperation, as the initiative arose in Latin America, was supported by Spanish Cooperation and has been adopted by Spanish parliamentarians. It is important to emphasise that, beyond the shaping of a Spanish Parliament, we are still waiting for the introduction of policies to improve food, such as food labelling.

Links with Spanish academia have resulted in the Right to Food in Spain Observatory (ODA-E), initially led by the University of Barcelona, the University of Oviedo and the Polytechnic University of Madrid, and currently made up of over thirty academic institutions, including faculties, colleges, departments, institutes, chairs and observatories. The ODA-E aims to foster multidisciplinary research initiatives that help influence public policy and guarantee the enforceability of the right to adequate food and related issues.

The impact of the Parliamentary Fronts has also led to new ways of working in FAO. For the first time in the FAO’s Strategic Plan 2023-2030, parliamentary alliances appear within the organisation’s mandate, where the proposed outcomes include replicating and strengthening parliamentary alliances. In addition, an FAO-Rome unit has been created to strengthen alliances at the global level. Similarly, the Parliamentary Fronts were invited to one of the FAO’s regional conferences, where the FAO’s regional work agenda is decided. The Fronts made recommendations to regional agriculture ministers about which areas to work on and why. They also stressed the importance of continuing to work with the Parliamentary Fronts and this has now been included on FAO's work agenda.

Challenges facing the Parliamentary Fronts:

- Getting budgetary approval for emerging laws on food security and nutrition.
- Coordinating Spanish Cooperation Offices (SCOs) with the work of the Parliamentary Fronts so that they can complement each other and create synergies for greater impact on food and nutrition status.
- Ensuring that Spain capitalises on the entire political process generated within the Parliamentary Fronts framework and shares these insights in the recommendations made at global nutrition forums.

- The nature of the Parliamentary Fronts requires multi-year grants. They currently work with annual grants, which makes it difficult to plan actions for subsequent years. Multi-year planning is required to help set medium-term targets and actions.
- Putting the work with the Parliamentary Fronts of Latin America and the Caribbean into context so as to provide technical assistance to emerging PFs in Africa. Due to their particular characteristics, these emerging PFs need additional support, such as coordination with international cooperation organisations, as many of the resources used come from cooperation sources and not from the country itself.

Right to food within the framework of the Parliamentary Fronts:

Working with the Parliamentary Fronts in Latin America and the Caribbean lends weight to the importance of nutrition as a government issue. Legislative power helps ensure the human right to food by creating laws aimed at improving the population's nutritional status and generating more adequate food environments.

It is no coincidence, for example, that nutrition labelling laws in Latin America are the result of the work of the Parliamentary Fronts. This demonstrates the government's solid intention to address food and nutrition in the best possible way through policy.

Ensuring fulfilment of the human right to food through legislative power reinforces AECID's willingness to back this right and its firm commitment to it. This is in line with the work driven by Spain through its funding of the FAO's Right to Food Office in Rome and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food.

Through its many members, including the Parliamentary Front, the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative integrated the human right to food into its policies and laws. This region has worked to integrate the right to food into its constitutions, policies and strategies more than any other region and the Human Right to Food Office works very closely within the framework of this initiative. The work in Latin America and the Caribbean stands out from the work in other regions, such as Asia, where there is no support structure such as the one set up by AECID and FAO. In Africa, the emerging Parliamentary Fronts are developing a more structured workspace to advocate for the human right to food.

The shared experiences gleaned from the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative and the Human Right to Food in Spain intervention gain strength from each other and spark sustainable actions among all of the actors involved in these processes. Spain has provided significant support through its funding of The Human Right to Food Office and the UN's Special Rapporteur on the right to food.

AECID's support of the Human Right to Food Office is invaluable, as the office plays an advocacy role at a country level, and also at a global level through the food security committees and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It also supports internal work at the FAO level by acting as custodian of the human right to food. Nutrition

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is at the heart of this right and this role, through the promotion of policies, strategies and monitoring.

AECID's strategic vision is to provide comprehensive support for the human right to food and the fight against hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean. This support is driven by the concept of governance and long-term, structured and coherent intervention, as well as investing in the FAO team, and this is shown in the direct link between legislation in Latin America and the Caribbean and Spanish investment.

Despite the progress made, there is still some way to go. Coherence within AECID and its programmes needs to be reinforced, i.e. how this approach is integrated into the various areas of work, such as health, food security and gender, among others.

Furthermore, work still needs to be done on aligning AECID-funded projects. The work carried out needs to be taken advantage of and insights made in order to highlight AECID's work with the Fronts and the right to food.

KEY IDEAS IN THIS SECTION

- The FAO - AECID alliance provides significant technical support and consolidation to the Parliamentary Fronts.
- Work aimed at improving food and nutrition requires action with regards legal frameworks and the budgetary allocations arising therefrom.
- The Parliamentary Fronts take a multidimensional approach to nutrition, which is shown in the range of proposed and issued regulations covering a number of key aspects to nutrition.
- The Parliamentary Fronts' work on the human right to food is eminently practical, as they create the legal frameworks that guarantee this right and other factors linked to it.
- The legislation produced by the Parliamentary Fronts show that it is possible to take a broad approach to nutrition, building bridges between the work focused on hunger and malnutrition, including undernutrition, overweight and obesity, and the efforts to achieve good nutritional status.
- The example set by the Parliamentary Fronts in Latin America and the Caribbean is being adopted by other regions around the world, such as in Africa, and countries like Spain. This shows that South-South and South-North learning and experiences can be shared and swapped.
- The work undertaken with the Parliamentary Fronts remains strictly technical and political, enabling an appropriate working environment where members of parliament from different parties come together around clear nutrition and food objectives.
- Links between academia (universities) and the Parliamentary Fronts encourage dialogue and guide academic research towards understanding and providing solutions to a real problem that affects the population. These links also boost development actions that are defined and driven by the local actors themselves.

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**CASE STUDIES:
ADDRESSING
NUTRITION ON
THE GROUND**

6

The country-level case studies have been chosen on the basis of the following criteria:

- Top AECID recipient countries according to the OECD - Data Explorer data for funded projects under the nutrition heading (basic nutrition code 12240).
- Geographical scope, representing regions of Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Partner countries with a historical contribution from AECID.
- Countries with model intervention experiences driven by their governments, such as the 3N initiative in Niger and the Guatemalan Secretariat for Food and Nutritional Security (SESAN).

6.1. CASE STUDY: GUATEMALA

In Guatemala, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) has four main areas of work: the fight against gender-based violence, strengthening the rule of law and the fulfilment of human rights, reducing chronic child undernutrition and historical heritage.

These priorities are contained in the current Guatemala-Spain Country Partnership Framework 2021-2024 in response to government objectives and guidelines that are prioritised and defined by Guatemala. Nutrition fits within the General Government Policy 2020-2024, under the umbrella of Social Development, as one of the government's commitments is to improve food and nutrition security, health, education and access to housing, and to help break the poverty cycle by developing human capital and promoting social welfare programmes. Similarly, the government has included actions to prevent undernutrition in its national strategies, such as the Great National Crusade for Nutrition (currently the *Mano a Mano* initiative). This strategy focuses on: 1. Preventing chronic undernutrition and anaemia; 2. Reducing maternal and infant morbidity and mortality; 3. Promoting food and nutrition security among the Guatemalan population; 4. Bolstering basic services in the country in a permanent and timely manner; and 5. Preventing infectious and chronic diseases.

The “Reducing Child Undernutrition” programme has therefore been prioritised within the Country Partnership Framework 2021-2024 and is also one of AECID's priorities, given the high levels of chronic undernutrition in Guatemala. It is also a response to the report and recommendations from previous Country Partnership Frameworks, which point out the comparative advantage of Spanish Cooperation in the areas in which it has traditionally worked: combating undernutrition and reducing gender-based violence against women and girls.

The Reducing Chronic Child Undernutrition Programme operates in 36 municipalities in the country and its funding sources have included bilateral and multilateral interventions, the Cooperation Fund for Water and Sanitation (FCAS) and NGDO agreements and projects.

The programme has five lines of action: i) Access to food, ii) Economic development, iii) Water and sanitation, iv) Health and v) Climate change. 19 interventions are currently being implemented and €52.5 million have been assigned within the Reducing Undernutrition Programme framework. Out of these five lines of action, a major boost has been given to water and sanitation via the Water Fund. These efforts have impacted over 164,000 people in 174 communities.

Below are details of the interventions for each of the lines of action:

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| <p>ACCESS TO FOOD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food deliveries Family vegetable gardens Varied diet Introducing improved seeds Food and seed banks Food governance Rural expansion | <p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irrigation systems Savings groups Production initiatives Business training and capacity building |
| <p>WATER AND SANITATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to drinking water Access to sanitation Water quality Protecting water catchment areas and sources Water governance Access to and rehabilitation of public water and sanitation | <p>HEALTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food deliveries Family vegetable gardens Varied diet Introducing improved seeds Food and seed banks Food governance Rural expansion |
| <p>CAMBIO CLIMÁTICO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solid waste Soil preservation Reforestation Research Support for nationally decided contributions (expected reduction of greenhouse gas emissions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) | |

The interventions included as part of these strategic lines of action aim to reduce child undernutrition using a multidimensional approach. This approach addresses access to food by providing food assistance, but also by strengthening production through improved production methods and farmer capabilities. Economic development is addressed through savings groups and production initiatives, water and sanitation are addressed not only from a human consumption perspective, but also by protecting water catchment areas. Lastly, health is addressed by prioritising the first 1,000 days of life, and attention is paid to climate change.

This range of interventions within the five strategic lines of action reflects the multidimensional concept of nutrition. Structural actions integrate a number of key nutritional factors within a holistic approach.

Generally speaking, nutrition interventions in Guatemala have followed a similar strategy. These include working with the health sector to ensure support for families,

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changing habits, improving access to food by diversifying production, and increasing access to water and sanitation. Innovation in nutrition projects is linked to organising and strengthening public institutions to ensure coordination and to place nutrition on the public agenda. In other words, innovation focuses on the strategies used to address nutrition, i.e. how the work will be undertaken and, to a lesser extent, the actions implemented.

Furthermore, the programme is structured around two main areas of work: the national level and the local level. The national level relates to strengthening government capacity for comprehensive care, i.e. coordinating the main stakeholders, as this is key for achieving a multisectoral approach to nutrition.

This coordination narrative is also embedded within the Guatemalan government's priorities to combat undernutrition. In practice however, this multidimensional strategy is not clearly reflected, as the ultimate goal should be the impact made on households. Complementary key government services should be received simultaneously by the same household. Certain households should not receive some services and other households other services, as this waters down the expected impact on reducing undernutrition.

Coordinating the fight against chronic undernutrition is a national priority and a specific objective for the Guatemalan Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Security (SESAN). The following specific objective is identified: Strengthen the coordination of food and nutrition security actions undertaken by national food and nutrition security system entities, both at the central and territorial level, through good food and nutrition security governance.

Coordination is however limited, due to a number of factors. This includes little policy assessment, as there are no tools to identify or assess the actions implemented or the outcomes. This is linked to the institutional nature of management, deficient information systems and outdated information used for decision making. It has a huge impact on the actions implemented, as no information on their effectiveness is generated and although these actions might not help reduce undernutrition, the information could be used to inform future actions.

Another limiting factor might be the poor monitoring of agreements within the Food and Nutrition Security Policy framework in each of the operational plans of the ministries that make up the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security. According to legislation, each of these entities is responsible for carrying out these actions.

Despite this, no one entity has been appointed to monitor the agreements or provide technical assistance to do this, as the Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Security (SESAN) has powers over coordinating food and nutrition security actions, but has no authority to provide technical assistance or monitor the agreements.



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At the national level, AECID has driven the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative. Guatemala is an active participant in this initiative and forms part of the Parliamentary Front against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean, but these actions do not link up with the Spanish Cooperation Office's actions on a national level. Actions are therefore implemented independently and there are no joint efforts to coordinate work at the executive and legislative levels.

Work at the community level focuses on families, particularly during the first 1,000 days of a child's life, due to the impact that interventions can have during this stage. In practice however, this work continues until children are five years old. Similarly, the programme has an impact on strengthening local and municipal capacities to achieve this long-awaited coordination. It focuses its efforts on strengthening institutions and local coordination actions, so that the government-run measures, such as conditional cash transfers, school meals programmes and efforts driven by the farming sector can be coordinated, improving service provision efficiency for families.

It is an ongoing challenge to strengthen institutions, not only because of the poor management capacity at the local level, but also because there is little flexibility and space for local decision making. Budgets are allocated centrally and no discretion is granted to decide how and on what to spend money locally. Furthermore, there are no mechanisms in place to gather information on local needs and to feed these needs into the decision-making process at national level. As a result, centralised decisions do not always meet the needs identified locally and this undermines the timeliness and relevance of public investment.

Despite these difficulties, AECID is committed to backing municipal work at the local level, both in terms of supporting stakeholders and coordinating them, and also in terms of

promoting citizen participation through Local Development Councils. A good example of this is the water line of action in Sololá, which falls within the framework of water projects in the area. Given the nutrition interventions, work in this area focuses on the issues identified by the Departmental Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CODESAN), which coordinates institutions and civil society in the territory.

By creating a specific line of action around the issue of water, which has now been expanded to food and nutrition security, the work undertaken has gradually highlighted the importance of nutrition. This specific line of action has also opened up the work to include other key factors in nutrition and food security.

One of the main issues at the national and local level is therefore institutional strengthening to enable appropriate coordination and to place nutrition on the local agenda. Although there is a strong commitment to institutional strengthening at the national level, funds are channelled through NGOs or multilateral agencies to ensure adequate implementation of interventions, given that public institutions have limited resources and technical management capacity. Managing funds through public institutions would require a number of adjustments to strengthen public management and its tools, processes and timing, as well as at an issue-level.

Furthermore, coordination is not only a local challenge, but also a Spanish Cooperation challenge, especially if the belief is that coordination should be manifested in complementary interventions addressing one family, and not as a number of isolated interventions addressing several families. At this point, it is worth considering the impacts that AECID wants to achieve. Is the aim to maximise intervention coverage or to achieve a tangible impact on undernutrition figures through complementary interventions in the same household?

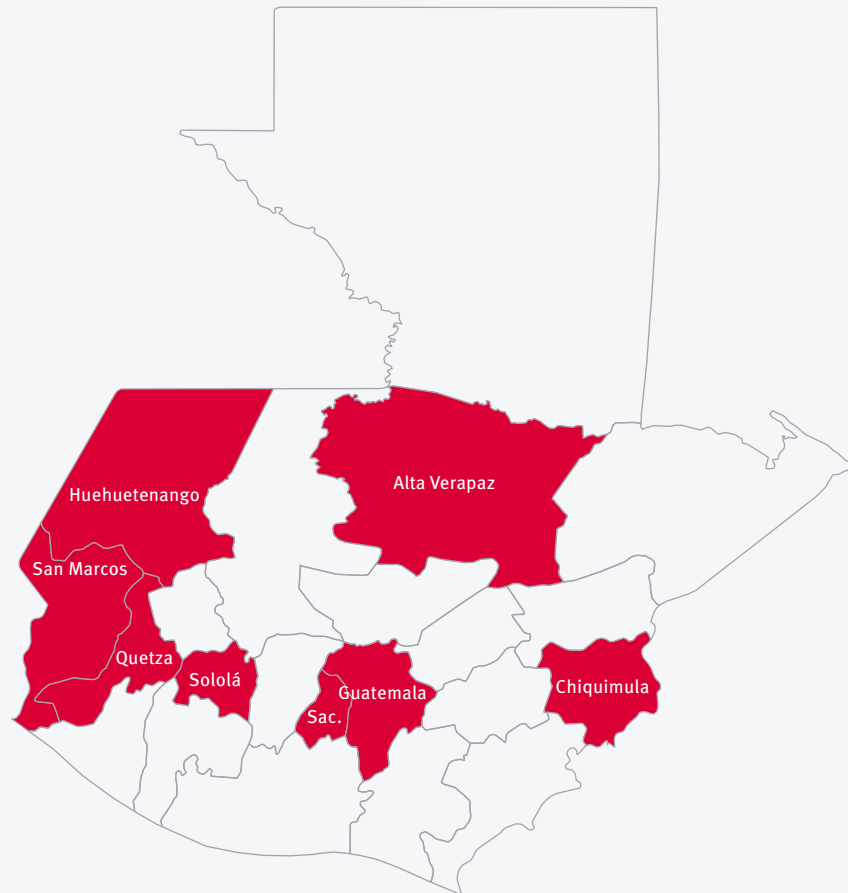
One way that AECID could maximise impact would be through its role in coordinating Spanish Cooperation. This would however require essential interventions in each territory to be identified beforehand and the EC to be aligned with these needs.

AECID is a founding member of and actively participates in the Spanish Donor Group (G13), which brings together Guatemala's main bilateral and multilateral donors, both financial (IDB, WB) and non-financial (EU, UN system and OAS). Spain has held the G13's pro tempore secretariat on the greatest number of occasions, and takes an active role in dialogue, discussion and the alignment of international cooperation in the country. The G13 coordinates efforts at three levels: political, development cooperation and sectoral or issue-level. There are currently seven sectoral groups: Security and justice, health, education, environment and water, rural development and food security, gender and indigenous populations.

To increase the impact of reducing undernutrition and to remedy the lack of coordination at a household level, the Cooperation Office in Guatemala has organised projects in terms of programme and geographic concentration. This does not however ensure that the interventions benefit the same families in a coordinated way, which is why putting the programme into operation is quite an ambitious challenge.

Incidentally, and due to the Water Fund's coverage, a large area has previously been covered, and currently a part of it still receives attention from other projects within the framework of the Reducing Chronic Undernutrition Programme. The interventions complement each other and generate synergies around key nutrition factors, so they are expected to have an impact on reducing undernutrition.

Image 1. Geographic concentration - Spanish Cooperation Office in Guatemala



In addition to local geographic concentration as a way of coordinating interventions, AECID's role enables all Spanish Cooperation funding to be coordinated (city councils, regional governments and universities, among others) and thus, the interventions.

Gender focus in intervention projects in Guatemala:

Working with women on nutrition projects is key to achieving the changes sought in terms of the nutritional status of children. Priority is given to working with pregnant or breastfeeding women, female heads of households, due to their vulnerable situation, and women who have been victims of violence, particularly women whose children are undernourished.

Moreover, the roles of women and men in Guatemala are very different, so the aim is to involve men in the feeding and care of children. This is done by working on new concepts of masculinity, and by fostering paternal support for the proper growth and care of children.

Challenges facing nutrition interventions in Guatemala:

Nutrition is not given huge importance at national level, i.e. support towards the fight against undernutrition from civil society is limited and nutrition projects have to be implemented against this backdrop. This requires a huge amount of information to be disseminated so that the population supports the actions, investment and prioritisation of actions to reduce undernutrition in the territories. Making nutrition a key issue will enable investment for these activities to be prioritised.

One reason for nutrition's poor standing could be the lack of updated information on nutritional status at the national level. The latest data on chronic undernutrition in Guatemala are from 2014-2015. This makes it difficult to monitor changes in undernutrition and to assess the policies implemented and their impact on reducing undernutrition.

A further challenge is the filtering down of public policy from the national to local level. Policies need to be clear, but they must also be rolled out and put into operation at a local level, so that they reach territories efficiently and can be prioritised in institutional actions.

Yet another challenge is for the Cooperation Office to gain some level of decision-making power in order to guide where interventions should take place. As nutrition is approached in a multisectoral manner and requires medium- and long-term interventions, geographical regions need to be prioritised in coordination with national institutions to ensure that the interventions complement each other, and meet the needs of the territories, better targeting institutional, monitoring and financial resources.

As already mentioned, working on nutrition projects, particularly chronic undernutrition, requires medium- and long-term interventions in the same territory. AECID needs to incorporate this vision to achieve funding that helps address complementary factors until a territory graduates, and then another territory can become the focus. This would also enable organisational learning to take place in terms of multidimensional and long-term interventions.

There are limited human resources in Guatemala's Spanish Cooperation Office, and following-up on ongoing projects is even more complicated when the regions are very spread out.

Multiple projects make up the Reducing Undernutrition Programme and they tackle key nutrition factors from a short-term, structural perspective. Each of these interventions undergoes a final assessment, which looks at the extent to which the objectives set have

been met. Given that the interventions fall within a programme framework however, the programme objectives need to be assessed to identify whether the projects are effectively helping to reduce undernutrition.

Another fundamental challenge is managing knowledge generated in the field, which helps guide AECID's work in nutrition. Given the agency's experience in the territory, this knowledge needs to be capitalised on in a suitable manner.

AECID-funded projects in Guatemala from 2018 to 2022 (Nutrition marker):

The type of projects funded by AECID in Guatemala from 2018 to 2022 were obtained using the OECD Data Explorer's principal "Nutrition" marker. We can therefore see that the projects implemented in Guatemala seek to impact on nutrition through actions in food security and local agricultural production, with special emphasis on promoting the human right to food, taking into consideration climate change adaptation measures and with a special focus on gender to empower women.

The gender approach is one of the most important. Projects include those to empower women economically, linking this to food security, and working with women in cooperatives.

Other nutrition projects aim to strengthen primary healthcare, as this is a key tool for reducing undernutrition.

The many aspects addressed by the projects show a holistic view of nutrition, although not necessarily all of these aspects are included in the same project.

| YEAR | GUATEMALA |
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| 2018 | Supporting the construction of basic infrastructures and sanitation and educational equipment in the department of Alta Verapaz |
| 2019 | <p>Introducing sustainable and resilient endogenous productive systems so that families, especially women and children, can improve their own nutrition. The overall objective is to help reduce child undernutrition by promoting the human right to food through strategic alliances with duty bearers. Sustainable productive systems will be implemented using traditional skills, and citizen participation, particularly of women, will be encouraged to influence structural change.</p> <p>Measures to adapt to climate variability and change will be introduced to help with food and nutrition security and to reduce child undernutrition in communities and municipalities in the department of Sololá, Guatemala.</p> <p>Strengthening food security resilience from a gender and intercultural perspective. Helping promote environmental sustainability by preventing and combating the effects of climate change. Promoting environmental conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources, building resilience and protecting livelihoods from a gender perspective as a way to empower women and close existing gaps in power and inequality.</p> |
| 2020 | <p>Preventing deterioration in the nutritional status of Guatemala's most vulnerable rural communities.</p> <p>Empowering women economically, with a focus on food security in light of the possible effects of Covid-19, in the rural municipalities linked to the Commonwealth of Municipalities of the Rio Naranjo basin in Guatemala. Second phase.</p> |

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| YEAR | GUATEMALA |
|------|--|
| 2021 | Building sustainable, fair and resilient community environments in Guatemala. |
| | Health and food security in San Marcos: increasing resilience in vulnerable communities within the context of Covid-19. |
| | Strengthening the food security of female producers linked to the Cuatro Pinos Comprehensive Agricultural Women's Cooperative. |
| 2022 | Strengthening the food security of female producers linked to the Cuatro Pinos Comprehensive Agricultural Women's Cooperative. Phase II |
| | Combating child undernutrition by promoting community action and technological solutions. |
| | Phase II Turer b'ixirar inb'utz (Living better) |
| | Strengthening primary healthcare (PHC) and the networking strategy to benefit comprehensive care and reduce undernutrition in Guatemala and the department of Sololá. (Year 2) |

Source: OECD. Data Explorer. <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>

6.2. CASE STUDY: HONDURAS

AECID has operated in Honduras for over 40 years, during which time it has worked to build development processes in the country. Its lines of work are currently aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the European Union's Joint Programming Strategy, and the Honduran government's management tools, such as the Country Vision 2010-2038, the government's Strategic Plan, the Gender Equity and Equality Plan, and Spanish Cooperation's Master Plan.

The Honduras - Spain Country Partnership Framework 2020-2023, which has been extended, sets out three development outcomes: DO1. To ensure social well-being and inclusive economic growth locally; DO2. For women, girls and groups that are discriminated against because of their sexual identity to fully exercise their rights, with a life free of violence; and DO3. To encourage the rule of law and democratic governance.

DO1 includes the following intermediate outcomes: O1.1.1. Improved implementation of national food and nutrition security policy on a local basis, with leadership from local governments and broad social participation; O1.1.2. Producers increase and diversify their production, transformation and marketing capacity, and they are integrated in value chains and productive clusters; O1.1.3. Improved access to drinking water, sanitation and governance of water resources; O1.1.4. Improved infrastructures that aid economic development and social well-being; O1.1.5. Strengthened economic and business fabric and social sector structure within the local economy to aid sustainable economic growth; O1.1.6. The country's cultural heritage is preserved, leading to job creation and the regeneration of urban and rural spaces.

The Country Partnership Framework therefore places nutrition within the framework of food and nutrition security. This is set out as a combined action that integrates the 4 pillars of food and nutrition security: access to drinking water, access to sanitation, access to government systems responsible for follow-up actions, and monitoring and action around the country's nutrition position.

The strategies underpinning DO1 seek to strengthen municipal government and territorial planning in the search for sustainable, local solutions that place food and nutrition security in development plans at all levels. These actions are based on generating local economic opportunities and specific actions to ensure food and nutrition health that, in turn, create the tools on which to base future national policies.

The EUROSAN- DEL programme is in alignment with strengthening institutions and sustainable nutrition development initiatives. This programme uses the delegated cooperation mechanism, with the European Union allocating €9 million to provide complementary support to food and nutrition security and local economic development.

The project's objective is to "Help reduce poverty and malnutrition" via 3 specific

objectives: SO.1. Improve equal access to affordable, quality public social services and improve nutrition-related behaviours in children under 5 and women of reproductive age; SO.2. Reinforce a holistic approach to local development, improving the capacities of local governments to effectively programme, budget, monitor, roll out and account for food security and nutrition policy, backed up by a rights-based approach; and SO.3. Improve the effectiveness of coordination actions, evidence-based information management, knowledge creation and food and nutrition security. In other words, improve evidence-based public policy by integrating the findings of social audit and food nutrition security studies. EUROSAN-DEL's scope of action covers 39 municipalities. The project involves public institutions, such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior, the Association of Municipalities of Honduras (AMHON), and other civil society institutions such as the Association of Honduran Non-Governmental Organisations (ASONOG) and the University of Zamorano.

This intervention adds value to the field of nutrition, as it swaps the traditional intervention approach for a holistic approach, working alongside duty bearers to generate sustainable capacities and processes. This strengthens the municipalities, so that food and nutrition policies are incorporated into the municipal plans with interventions effectively reaching the population, and it also strengthens the government body in charge of strategies that generate the necessary changes for the benefit of Honduran society. The major challenge is to implement actions linked to food and nutrition security at a local level, with ongoing guarantees and support provided nationally. Alongside this institutional strengthening, Zamorano University, which



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specialises in agriculture and food security, generates evidence and innovation in the field of food and nutrition security. At the same time, support is given to the Ministry for Health, the national body responsible for monitoring and following-up nutrition actions through the CSAI Foundation, which specialises in public health, and manages the provision of supplies to health centres and the training of health personnel in food and nutrition security issues. By coordinating these activities, the project is given the necessary coherence to achieve the expected impact.

Good nutrition is linked to good health and this, in turn, is linked to good water quality. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) work is key to any comprehensive nutrition intervention.

This methodology provides the backbone for Spanish Cooperation's coordination work, driven by AECID, to complement the intervention framework in the territories. One example is a project led by the Cooperation Office in Honduras, in partnership with Caritas, which focuses on five municipalities adjacent to EUROSAN-DEL's sphere of influence. This project aims to reduce hunger and improve the population's living conditions. The CSAI Foundation runs a project to improve primary healthcare within the framework of food and nutrition security.

The coordinating role of the Cooperation Office in Honduras has been crucial to achieving interventions that complement each other in the territories and to guiding the necessary interventions based on previously identified needs. To further improve coordination, the Cooperation Office in Honduras has scheduled meetings with all Spanish Cooperation stakeholders in the territory. In addition, efforts are also made to design complementary actions with other cooperation workers operating in the country. AECID therefore seeks to create synergies with existing resources in order to generate greater impact in the territories.

Moreover, as with other AECID projects, context is a key aspect when looking at and implementing projects, as the country is so diverse in terms of climate, socio-economic conditions, food insecurity and vulnerability.

Gender mainstreaming in AECID projects in Honduras:

Children and women aged between 15 and 49 years are the main focus groups in direct nutrition intervention processes. Actions include promoting adequate nutrition, the importance of health controls and nutrition practices appropriate to the characteristics of the child, such as breastfeeding.

Beyond working directly to empower women, the EC aims to create the conditions and processes needed for women to participate in producing development plans and in decision-making spaces, mainly within the framework of the work with municipalities. Against this backdrop, coordination is undertaken with municipal women's offices,

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although these agencies do not always have a budget. From these offices, local women promote women's policies, working on issues such as health, nutrition and food security directly with their colleagues in the municipality.

Female participation is also promoted through other lines of work, such as water and sanitation, water catchment management, territorial defence and education where the EC supports the building of safe spaces for participation and decision-making to take place.

Challenges:

Working in the Honduran context, where migration, human mobility, climate change and food insecurity are unavoidable factors in cooperation, requires a holistic approach and integration of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

Other challenges include addressing health and food practices in indigenous territories from an intercultural perspective. Taboos and not-so-successful interventions need to be identified, and then communities need to be encouraged to reflect and to transform themselves.

A further challenge is to generate long-term development projects using a multidimensional approach to nutrition and to integrate the structural causes of malnutrition that require long-term interventions.

Despite the shortcomings in Honduras, malnutrition must also address overweight and obesity, which are starting to become a public health issue in the country. Actions to address these conditions are therefore essential and this requires a much more comprehensive view of nutrition and dual actions, i.e. actions to address both under and overnutrition.

Continuing to adapt each intervention to the individual setting is key to achieving relevant and effective intervention.

AECID-funded projects in Honduras from 2018 to 2022 (Nutrition marker):

The projects funded in Honduras and recorded from 2018 to 2022 using the OECD Data Explorer's principal "Nutrition" marker demonstrate the multidimensional approach to nutrition. This combines the fight against poverty, agriculture, building resilience and leadership in rural women, economic and cultural rights and strengthening government management in terms of water resources.

The fieldwork therefore demonstrates AECID's multidimensional commitment to addressing nutrition.

| YEAR | HONDURAS |
|------|---|
| 2018 | 2018 The NGO HN Vetermon improves governance to give vulnerable groups access to adequate nutrition and food. |
| 2019 | Supporting the fight against poverty in the rural south of the Dry Corridor in Honduras. Introducing better crops to ensure food security and other crops that raise incomes to meet basic needs. |
| 2020 | 2020- Honduras. Improving living conditions for indigenous families in Honduras in light of the Covid-19 emergency. Reinforcing the resilience and leadership of rural women in southern Honduras to encourage social and economic reactivation. The project took place in the municipalities of Orocuina and El Triunfo in the department of Choluteca. These municipalities have historically been affected by prolonged droughts, low yields and agricultural production losses. For these reasons, the project will focus on the Dry Corridor. The target audience are 115 rural women and their family units, comprising approximately 400 people. The 24-month-long project aims to reactivate the production structure and marketing and advocacy capacities of 15 groups of rural women to reinforce their human right to adequate food and nutrition. The project also aims to promote resilient livelihoods and income sustainability, helping these women to be less vulnerable in the medium-term and to close the gender gap. |
| 2021 | Accessing the economic, social and cultural rights of excluded children and young people at the municipal landfill in Tegucigalpa. |
| 2022 | Improving public and social management for the governance of water resources in 9 municipalities in the Gulf of Fonseca region. |

Source: OECD. Data Explorer. <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>

6.3. CASE STUDY: NIGER

There is a political crisis in Niger with a coup d'état experienced in August 2023. This crisis is aggravated by recurrent floods, which generate infectious and other related diseases. Floods happen regularly, yet there are no prevention policies in place to address the problem.

The situation is made worse by the problems facing humanitarian aid workers in accessing the country, which hampers the response, and also increases the cost, as armed escorts are needed in the main crisis regions (Tillabéri, Tahoua, Maradi and Diffa).

Food crises are also common in the country, as there is chronic food insecurity. Since 2000, there have been four major food crises. During the 2017 crises, it is estimated that over 1.5 million people were affected. In addition, the number of people facing food insecurity increases to almost 30% during periods of drought.

What is more, 42.2% of children under five suffer from chronic undernutrition and 10.3% from acute undernutrition. The context in Niger merits an intervention to tackle both chronic and acute undernutrition. Each type of malnutrition requires a different treatment, but both require structural actions to address the determining factors.

At AECID's Spanish Cooperation Office in Niger, humanitarian aid actions to address acute undernutrition dominate, although they are not limited to this one area. Actions seek to include the determinants of malnutrition, meaning that measures such as diet diversification, preventing malnutrition and community nutrition are also adopted.

“We understand nutrition as all these stages; it is not just treatment, but also prevention”

Interview with the Spanish Cooperation Office in Niger

The Spanish Cooperation Office in Niger understands that, although acute undernutrition requires immediate action (which includes nutrition treatments), the resilience of families also needs to be bolstered, so that children with acute undernutrition do not then present with these symptoms on a regular basis. Interventions must therefore include both medium- and long-term actions.

In terms of nutrition treatments, efforts are being made to develop local products using flour from the region. Given the border closures with Niger, it is very expensive to transport nutrition treatments from abroad and gaining access to them is difficult. In light of this situation, tests are being carried out on developing these products using local supplies, generating ownership and sustainability and reducing foreign dependency.

By incorporating actions linked to development and food security, the aid approach is also transformed, strengthening the response from communities and citizens.

As malnutrition has more than one cause, a wide range of stakeholders are involved in providing solutions. Participation by the farming industry and the health sector is essential, for example. It is therefore fundamental to strengthen the health system and production, so that the necessary access can be provided. Another key issue in this multi-causality is access to safe water, which helps prevent infectious diseases. Spanish Cooperation has a comparative advantage in both sectors, as it adds value in relation to rural development and modernising agriculture².

In the farming industry, actions are targeted at irrigation, aimed at diversifying diets and stabilising food security throughout the year, thus trying to avoid seasonal food insecurity.

Despite this range of development and food security actions, there is a need for medium- and long-term strategies that are allocated the necessary resources and means. In addition, it is crucial that the changing context is interpreted appropriately. To do this, specialists are needed at certain times and there also needs to be some agreement on intervention strategies.

Niger also has significant challenges in terms of cultural issues. First and foremost, these need to be understood and subsequently, they must be looked at in light of nutrition and food security. Examples include intra-household food distribution and the cultural patterns it responds to, child marriage and how the highest undernutrition figures coincide with the regions in which these practices are commonplace.

Other indirect malnutrition factors are the number of children per female and the interpregnancy interval, for which family planning and access to contraceptives is one of the alternatives. There are, however, deep-seated beliefs that could limit the use of these methods and many young women want to be mothers at an early age, as in their local culture this can demonstrate that you have already reached adulthood by taking charge of a new life. According to the National Population Policy, 63% of deaths in Niger are preventable and are mainly due to high fertility levels, the high number of children per woman and high-risk pregnancies.

Furthermore, some local practices can be fostered by social welfare interventions, such as saving committees driven by women. These committees allocate a certain amount of money every month and give the total amount to each of the women in the agreed months. The savings can be used for any educational or health contingency.

These interventions are linked to the main areas of action for the country set out in the 2023-2027 Country Partnership Framework. Although it doesn't identify strategic areas as such, it focuses on the SDGs, based on the experience gained in Niger and the technical, economic and human capacities of Spanish Cooperation in the region from a multi-sectoral perspective. The following SDGs are prioritised in the Country

² Niger-Spain Country Partnership Framework (CPF)



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Partnership Framework: SDG1 No Poverty, SDG2 Zero Hunger, SDG3 Good Health and Well-being, SDG4 Quality Education, SDG5 Gender Equality, SDG9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure³.

In terms of SDG1, the main areas of action are: strengthening the national system for food crisis prevention and management, continuing and intensifying the fight against poverty and hunger, incorporating the gender approach, with special attention to vulnerable populations, establishing social safety nets and driving behavioural changes towards nutrition, through key family practices.

One of the outcomes of SDG2 is for producers to increase their income thanks to sustainably improving their production and productivity. Supporting small-scale producers to take advantage of the resources and means of small- and medium-sized farming, forestry and fishing operations in rural areas to make improvements in their production, paying special attention to women, as has been done in recent years.

The main challenges in relation to SDG3 are: greater accessibility of the population to health services, reproductive health development, increasing the efficiency of the health prevention system, efficient management of resources, the permanent availability of medicines, vaccines, consumables, food and therapeutic supplies, reagents, blood and other elements.

³ Niger-Spain Country Partnership Framework (CPF)

Gender approach in the projects driven by AECID in Niger:

Nutrition projects have included actions to engage men in the daily life of families and get them more involved. These actions are known as “schools for husbands” and they also introduce aspects of food management, given that women traditionally take all the responsibility for this area.

It is therefore a matter of mainstreaming gender in nutrition projects. Cultural practices also need to be taken into consideration, as some ethnic groups have a more matriarchal vision, while others are more patriarchal.

Among the recommendations for mainstreaming actions is to work on women's rights by economically empowering women. The potential negative effects that this could have should be assessed on an ongoing basis and actions to counteract these effects could be included. At times, for example, production and empowerment activities can overload women with tasks, leading them to take on additional activities on top of their caring duties, or men may stop taking care of some household expenses so that women can take care of them. In other cases, men may take over these income-generating activities and the women can get left behind, which is why working from a gender perspective also requires ongoing evaluations.

This work takes place against a backdrop of pronounced gender gaps, such as poor schooling levels among girls, difficult and scarce access to land for women and their status as head of the household⁴.

Challenges:

Although addressing acute undernutrition is an extremely urgent task, interventions to help reduce chronic undernutrition must also be undertaken, due to the high numbers of children affected and the serious consequences it has on brain development and therefore on the potential of each child.

This requires the country's public institutions to be strengthened, alongside creativity and a local response. This is a supreme challenge in circumstances where the capacity of the state and civil society has been weakened.

Another challenge is the funding required to implement acute undernutrition treatment actions, as they are ongoing and do not tend to decrease. Finding a funding balance between interventions to treat acute undernutrition and actions linked to the determinants of malnutrition and food security is a major ongoing challenge. It is a particularly complex scenario in Niger, where climate conditions, the geopolitical and economic situation, the effects of Covid-19 and a growing displaced, migrant or refugee population mean that Niger will steadily require more humanitarian interventions.

4. Niger-Spain Country Partnership Framework (CPF)

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When looking at issues such as health systems and agriculture, we must speak directly of the leadership needed to draw up public policies and implement them in line with the needs of the population and the context in which malnutrition is situated. This leadership is a significant challenge given that government budgets (50%) depend to a large extent on foreign aid⁵. Priorities are therefore not necessarily defined in line with the government's own strategies.

Knowledge management and the documenting of insights gathered in the field should also be included, thus strengthening present and future interventions. Higher impact actions could be designed on the basis of these insights and the actions and strategies that do not effectively help achieve the planned outcomes could be discarded.

AECID-funded projects in Niger from 2018 to 2022 (Nutrition marker):

The projects funded by AECID in Niger from 2018 to 2022 were obtained using the OECD Data Explorer's principal "Nutrition" marker. AECID-funded nutrition projects in Niger include building resilience to food and nutrition insecurity, covering production, strengthening value chains, gender equity and food assistance.

By stepping outside of the food assistance-only approach, these projects demonstrate how the determinants of undernutrition can be incorporated even when working in a food crisis context.

5. Niger-Spain Country Partnership Framework (CPF)

| YEAR | NIGER |
|------|--|
| 2018 | -,- |
| 2019 | <p>Increasing resilience to food and nutrition insecurity among vulnerable, displaced and refugee groups in Tillia. The project seeks to reduce food insecurity and promote nutritional resilience among the local and displaced/refugee population via two complementary lines of action within a Nexus approach: 1) Support the millet office, as millet is a priority crop in the Tahoua region, and value chain processes to improve sales and market access. 2) Access to a quality diet based on fortified local products. The goal is to increase the availability in local markets, school dining rooms and URENAM (walk-in unit for recovery and nutrition education) of nutritious and fortified foods that meet quality standards, are in line with local eating customs, are affordable and can be accessed by the entire population. Specifically, the project seeks to improve and increase production by adding innovative processes using fortified millet flours available on the market, improve their quality and work to stimulate demand. A flour unit will be built in the Intikane Hosting Area and managed by women. Not only will it help reduce malnutrition by increasing the availability of nutritious food in the local market, but it will also help empower women.</p> <p>UNICEF 2019 - Improving the quality and sustainability of severe acute undernutrition services in Niger.</p> |
| 2020 | <p>Improving food and nutrition security through a gender equality lens in the villages of Fandora and Ganguel de Niamey in Niger. To date, the impact of Covid-19 on the lives of people in Niger is smaller than in other surrounding African countries. The project's target audience is 249 women from 6 economic interest groupings (3 per village) and 200 men from 2 cooperatives (1 per village). The following lines of action are suggested: Improving agricultural production by introducing innovative techniques (solar-powered irrigation systems, improved seeds, PICS bags and improved grain stores) and training for rights holders. Improving transformation processes by equipping the 6 women's economic interest groups with transformation units for dry and irrigation products. Training will be provided on female leadership and associative participation to strengthen organisational capacities.</p> <p>Increasing cowpea production using innovative agroecological technologies to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 in Niger.</p> <p>Providing food assistance to the refugee population and host communities in Maradi.</p> <p>Funding DNP-GCA contingency plans through the Common Donor Fund.</p> |
| 2021 | <p>Supporting the resilience and empowerment of women and young people following the Covid-19 pandemic in Maradi, Niger.</p> <p>Improving food and nutrition security in Niamey, Niger, from a gender equity and rights of minors perspective</p> <p>Niger 2021 SAN DNP-GCA contingency plans.</p> <p>FAO 2021 Water and food security in Africa - IESA.</p> |
| 2022 | <p>WFP contribution to the national food crisis prevention and management support plan 2022 Niger.</p> <p>NIGER UNHCR 2022 Protection and livelihoods for internally displaced populations and host communities in the Central Sahel region of Niger.</p> |

Source: OECD. Data Explorer. <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>

6.4. CASE STUDY: MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique has been a priority country for Spanish Cooperation since the First Master Plan. The EC has been working on a variety of SDGs and in a number of territories. The intervention framework is aligned with the country's priorities and the 2021-2024 Country Partnership Framework, which integrates the Spanish Strategy and the Mozambique Five-Year Programme (2020-2024) as reference frameworks⁶.

The current Mozambique-Spain Country Partnership Framework sets out an overall objective to help fight poverty and to promote sustainable development. To do this it suggests improving health status and food and nutrition security, rural development opportunities, education linked to vocational training, gender equity, mainstreaming of gender approaches, cultural diversity and adaptation to climate change.

The Country Partnership Framework therefore puts an emphasis on primary care, undernutrition and training and research. In terms of rural development, priority is given to family farming and reducing food insecurity and with regards gender equality, the focus is on the fight against gender-based violence and equality, among other issues.

Within this framework, the Country Partnership Framework identifies five SDGs in its scope of action: ODS2 Zero Hunger, ODS3 Health and Well-being, ODS4 Quality Education, ODS5 Gender Equality, and ODS16, Strong Institutions.

For SDG2, two outcomes have been set:

- ▶ **Development outcome 1.-** Increased, sustainable farm production and productivity in priority areas and reduced chronic undernutrition.
- ▶ **Development outcome 2.-** Increased access to health services and better quality thereof.

In terms of intermediate outcomes for **Outcome 1**, the following have been set:

- ▶ **Intermediate outcome 1.1.-** Locally produced, processed and adequately stored food with high nutritional value is used by the most food insecure households.
- ▶ **Intermediate outcome 1.2.-** Small-scale producers in the priority rural areas increase their agricultural production and productivity in a sustainable and resilient way (farming, livestock, forestry, fishing and aquaculture).
- ▶ **Intermediate outcome 1.3.-** Coverage of safe water supply is increased, as is access to basic sanitation in households of vulnerable families with children, adolescents, pregnant women, nursing babies and children under the age of 2.

6. Mozambique- Spain Country Partnership Framework (CPF)

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Two intermediate outcomes are set for **Outcome 2**:

- ▶ **Intermediate outcome 2.1.**- Improved quality of general and basic health services, from a universal health coverage perspective and access to ongoing care and the social determinants of health and gender. Priority is given to the reduction and prevention of undernutrition, family planning services, pregnancy control, safe delivery and postpartum care, specialised medical training and access to quality specialist services.
- ▶ **Intermediate outcome 2.2.**- Support is given to implementing the National Research Agenda.

One of the priority territories for interventions is the province of Cabo Delgado, which has high chronic undernutrition figures. This follows the national trend (43.1%), which puts the country in the top 10 with the highest incidence of chronic undernutrition worldwide.

The Spanish Cooperation office in Mozambique has analysed chronic undernutrition statistics and socio-economic indicators and has thus been able to prioritise chronic undernutrition interventions in this province. These statistics and indicators were not comparable with trends in economic figures. The figures indicated that other aspects beyond the economic issue were also relevant in beating chronic undernutrition.

“We started to raise awareness at the institutional level and we realised that the farming, poverty and income indicators were, interestingly, not the worst in the country, although the child undernutrition indicators were”

Interview with the Spanish Cooperation office in Mozambique

The advocacy work carried out by the Spanish Cooperation office has helped put chronic undernutrition on the provincial agenda and into focus at the institutions working in this field. It has enabled much reflection on the multidimensional nature of chronic undernutrition and the multi-sectoral work it requires, which is challenging when public institutions are fragile and, in addition, there is no multisectoral strategy to address this problem. Beyond this, competition for funds is huge between sectors, with each one wanting to address their own issues. There is no governing or coordinating body for the fight against chronic undernutrition that could draw up a joint plan for all stakeholders involved and allocate budgets correctly. Meanwhile, the work of the public institutions remains disjointed and uncoordinated.

By prioritising chronic undernutrition and understanding that the phenomenon is multidimensional in nature, there has been ongoing interest in forming alliances with universities to understand the factors that give rise to chronic undernutrition beyond

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the productive and economic aspects. This includes cultural, anthropological and behavioural elements, as well as the role of women. Extensive research is required to understand this phenomenon fully, and this has not been possible, although it has been noted that this research is essential for more relevant and efficient work in this field.

This sector-level situation suggests that more work needs to be done on intra-institutional strengthening. In addition to the work to coordinate sectors, a multi-stakeholder and multidimensional strategy or plan needs to be drawn up to mobilise public institutions and, more generally, those operating in the territory to work under a shared objective. By doing this, the groups implementing interventions receive funding according to the activities that fall within the chronic undernutrition framework.

Chronic undernutrition requires actions in the territories in question to identify and prioritise characteristics according to the context. The Cooperation Office in Mozambique is pushing the third round of training for nutrition technicians. This shows that the programme has been well received and is seen as a key action in the fight against chronic undernutrition. This strategy also seeks sustainability for nutrition care in the territory, by strengthening local stakeholders.

Child nutrition projects have also been implemented with a focus on farming and food security and improving access to water, boosting water levels. This work has been carried out within the framework of the agreements and in the north and south of Mozambique.

The Mozambique Spanish Cooperation Office's position is clear: the chronic undernutrition approach has to include all the determinants of malnutrition and at the same time strengthen public institutions centrally.

Furthermore, the context must be analysed before interventions are implemented, so that the importance of each determinant of malnutrition in each territory is identified with greater precision, and on this basis, priority can be given to those determinants that need attention.

Success factors for work in the territories are therefore identified as monitoring the causes and those affected and understanding the social and anthropological causes of chronic undernutrition and to do this, adequate diagnosis is key.

Cabo Delgado is a priority working province for AECID in Mozambique and it suffers from permanent conflict. This conflict has broken out in the last few years, resulting in thousands of people being displaced by the war and greater dependence on food aid. Although AECID has humanitarian organisations in the field, the Spanish Cooperation Office is limited in terms of humanitarian work and the practical action and project implementation that can be undertaken in these situations. AECID carries out this work via NGOs or UN organisations. It is therefore important to note that humanitarian aid work is carried out through alliances and key partners.

Gender:

Poverty in Mozambique affects mainly women in rural areas, particularly in large rural areas in the centre and north of the country. Gender mainstreaming is therefore key in every intervention.

In Muslim cultures in Mozambique, women's access to education impacts significantly on the nutritional capacities of mothers and helps perpetuate myths that are not beneficial to the nutritional status of children. Here, women believe for example that children shouldn't eat eggs, as they will go bald. Research is required to help understand the nature of the problem, and in turn to prepare actions for appropriate intervention.

Another relevant issue is preventing teenage pregnancy, which is one of the main causes of chronic undernutrition in the country. Measures are needed to prevent girls who become pregnant from dropping out of school and, most importantly, actions to prevent teenage pregnancy in the first place.

No additional actions are identified in terms of gender and nutrition.

Challenges:

One of the characteristics of the Spanish Cooperation Office in Mozambique is its generalist personnel, who learn from their field experience. A lack of specialist technical staff to help with field interventions in certain areas is a challenge when the office wishes to address more specialised issues.

Interventions to improve nutritional status should be targeted at the territory and the families therein. They also need to support the workers who implement nutrition status and food security policies, particularly in a country such as Mozambique, where there is evidence of weakened public institutions and institutionalism and given the importance of the work in this area.

Mozambique is also familiar with increases in overweight and obesity. This calls for interventions that look at malnutrition as a whole and not just at chronic or acute undernutrition, as it has been shown that economic progress triggers a leap from undernutrition to overweight (23.8%)⁷.

As the Gender Unit and the rural development, food and nutrition security sector work with different funds, there is no work on the determinants of undernutrition linked to gender in the same territory, and gender mainstreaming in interventions is poor. One of the challenges therefore is to strengthen gender mainstreaming and complementary interventions in the same territories.

7. [moz-es.pdf \(who.int\)](#)

AECID-funded projects in Mozambique from 2018 to 2022 (Nutrition marker):

AECID's projects in Mozambique identified in the OECD Data Explorer using the principal "Nutrition" marker that link nutrition to food security and local production include climate change and agroecological approaches, gender and the strengthening of health systems.

In addition, other important elements, such as access to water for multiple uses, training mid-level nutritionists to fight chronic undernutrition and land ownership also arise.

The approaches used in Mozambique are in line with the priorities and approaches set out in management tools such as the Master Plans.

| YEAR | MOZAMBIQUE |
|------|---|
| 2018 | 2018 MZ MDM. Strengthening public and community multi-sectoral interventions to reduce undernutrition in Cabo Delgado. |
| 2019 | <p>Promoting access to food security, access to water and resource management to help improve the livelihoods of six vulnerable communities in the Magude district in the province of Maputo. The project has four outcomes: 1. Increased farming production and productivity to improve food security. 2. Guaranteed access to water for multiple uses and strengthened management committees by restoring dams, building water catchment systems and channelling irrigation systems, guaranteeing water availability throughout the year in the 6 communities. 3. Improved access to land ownership rights for 6 associations and 6 communities. 4. Improved sustainable and participatory management of forest resources in 6 communities, with sustainable management plans for forest resources.</p> <p>Improved living standards and food security via climate-resilient agroecological development in Cabo Delgado. The project's overall objective is to help reduce structural poverty in rural populations in the province of Cabo Delgado. Specifically, it aims to improve the living standards and food security of 300 families in the villages of Namiteue, Muisse, Ntessa (Metuge district) and Murrebue (Mecufi district) by developing climate-resilient agroecological production systems.</p> |
| 2020 | <p>Training mid-level nutritionists to help fight chronic undernutrition in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique.</p> <p>Helping improve food and nutrition security in Cabo Delgado province.</p> <p>Strengthening the resilience of farming families to cope with the socio-economic consequences of the crisis. This proposal will strengthen the resilience of farming families in 8 communities of Ancuabe (GO) by improving access to livelihoods to deal with the socio-economic effects of Covid (SO). This will be achieved by using a comprehensive value chain approach to develop 3 interdependent components. The first will improve food security in families by producing diversified food in a sustainable way (O1).</p> |
| 2021 | <p>Improving food security, safe water and sustainable resource management in vulnerable communities in Magude - Phase 2.</p> <p>2017 - 2021 Strategic Plan for Mozambique, Strategic outcome 2, Activity 3: supply cash and/or food transfers to vulnerable households affected by crises.</p> <p>Enhance food and nutrition security of vulnerable population in Balama by promoting farming production.</p> |
| 2022 | <p>Support for the ICRC's 2022 call for Mozambique.</p> <p>Improving food security and access to health in the districts of Chigubo and Mapai with a greater impact on women and girls.</p> <p>Improving the quality, coverage and resilience of the Cabo Delgado health system.</p> |

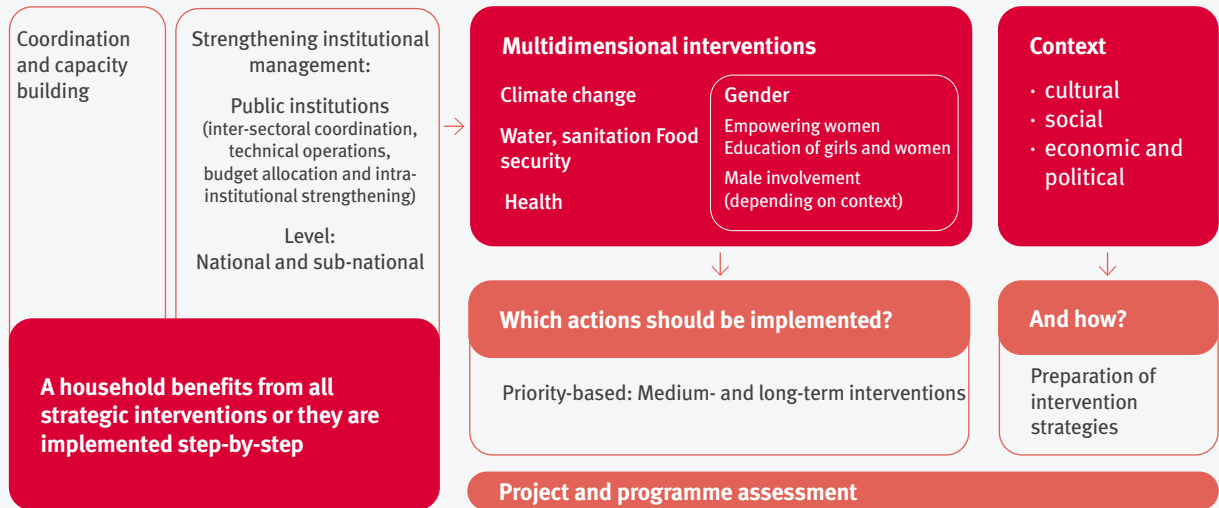
Source: OECD. Data Explorer. <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>

KEY IDEAS IN THIS SECTION

- The key ideas drawn from the case studies are shown in diagram 1 in this section.
- AECID's priorities in each country are set out in the Country Partnership Framework. This framework is drawn up within the context of national political priorities, Spanish Cooperation's Master Plan, EU priorities and the 2030 Agenda. In other words, national and international priorities are aligned.
- AECID-driven interventions are multidimensional and multi-sectoral. The core issues are climate change, water, sanitation, food security and health. Gender-based actions are also undertaken, although not in a very systematic way. This leaves room to generate insights and to implement gender-based actions that are tested in the field. On the recommendation of the Spanish Cooperation Offices, actions should be medium- and long-term.
- Interventions must adapt to the context, taking into account cultural, social, economic and political aspects. This leads to the preparation of intervention strategies.
- It is essential to assess the projects and the programme objectives, so as to know whether they are being met or not.
- Coordination of AECID projects must reach household level, i.e. a household benefiting from key nutrition interventions should be a benchmark for efficient coordination.
- Interventions must strengthen institutional management, both at the national and sub-national levels.
- AECID plays a key role in the field; it coordinates Spanish Cooperation's interventions, it identifies problems in the field that help highlight intervention needs and its work helps put issues on the public agenda.

Diagram 1. Rationale behind interventions in the case studies.

AECID PRIORITIES IN EACH COUNTRY SET OUT IN: COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORKS, ALIGNING WITH AGENDA 2030, EU PRIORITIES, EC MASTER PLAN AND NATIONAL POLICIES.



ROLE OF AECID IN THE FIELD: COORDINATING SPANISH COOPERATION, IDENTIFYING IMPLEMENTATION NEEDS IN THE TERRITORIES AND GUIDING IMPLEMENTATION OF EC INTERVENTIONS (SEEKING HOLISTIC APPROACH) AND ADVOCACY ROLE TO PUT ISSUES ON THE AGENDA

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**ENDER AND OTHER
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES
IN AECID'S NUTRITION
COOPERATION POLICIES
AND PROGRAMMES**

7

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Promoting sustainable human development through the fight against poverty and inequality is undoubtedly a key task for Spain's legislation on sustainable development cooperation (Law 1/2023). Furthermore, it acknowledges that priority must be given to the most disadvantaged, excluded or vulnerable people, including children, adolescents, young people, the elderly, people with disability, displaced individuals and refugees, and generally speaking, all those who suffer discrimination or violence for reasons of sex, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation or identity, gender, sexual characteristics, disability, or any other reason. This must be done using a cross-cutting gender lens and a rights-based approach (Law 1/2023).

It is therefore clear that human development can only be achieved when strategies are implemented to address disadvantaged groups, whether this is due to age, gender or culture, opening the possibility to other cross-cutting issues being included as well.

This vision of development is closely linked to the basic rights and freedoms approach, which puts human dignity at the centre and requires that human rights be put above any other condition or situation. Gender or other cross-cutting issues must not be an obstacle to an individual fully exercising their rights.

Gender equality thus becomes a basic principle of Spanish Cooperation, driven from a feminist approach. Gender equality is viewed as an essential, cross-cutting feature of Spanish Cooperation.

The importance of the gender approach is not new to Spanish Cooperation. Since 2005, in fact, the gender approach has gradually been incorporated using a dual, cross-cutting and specific strategy. The specific approach has intensified efforts to close gender gaps, fight all forms of violence and discrimination and empower women, adolescents and girls. All of this has been translated into processes and tools, such as planning, management, monitoring and assessment. Unsurprisingly, Spanish Cooperation policy is closely linked to Spanish national policy, which uses the gender approach adopted in cooperation policy as a reference point. Both prioritise a gender approach and draw from compliance with fundamental international treaties and optional protocols on gender equality and discrimination against women⁸. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Beijing Declaration (1995) and the Sustainable Development Goals (2015), which are commitments that guide policy, such as the Master Plans.

Spain's track record on gender has made it a benchmark actor in this field among donors, due to the scope of its actions and its participation in gender equality issues. In terms of status, the government's role has been key, especially when there are contrasting opinions and gender lies at the heart of many issues. A clear stance on gender has given it this status, particularly when a black or white opinion for or against the issue is the only one that can be taken.

8. The gender approach in Spanish cooperation for development within the framework of the 2030 Agenda | International Studies (uchile.cl)

The Gender Unit's creation in 2006 demonstrates the importance of the issue. The unit provides an organisational structure that gives gender greater visibility and enables adoption of the dual strategy: specific and cross-cutting. AECID addresses the gender approach to development in a complementary way from two perspectives:

- a. Specific, i.e. through empowering women to build their capacities and their social, economic and political position by changing traditional power structures. This requires actions to be rolled out through programmes, projects and specific interventions aimed at gradually closing inequality gaps between women and men. These actions focus specifically on reducing poverty and improving the status and position of women in terms of power and decision-making.
- b. Cross-cutting, as a process for assessing the implications for men and women of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes.

The 2023 Cooperation Act seeks to consolidate an integrated gender approach in the development of all management tools, reinforcing gender equality. The Fourth Master Plan expressly states that the gender approach must form the basis for each and every one of Spanish Cooperation's actions, promoting the empowerment of all to fully exercise their rights, participate politically, aiding social justice, decent jobs and accountability, ensuring non-discrimination on the basis of gender or other reasons of race or ethnicity, culture or language, religion or belief, origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, etc.

From the specific perspective, the Gender Unit is currently working on the *Ellas+* initiative, which was launched in 2021. The initiative aims to boost and accelerate progress in female participation and leadership at all decision-making levels in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres⁹, such as business and NGOs. In the last few years, care and digitalisation have both been included from the point of view of leadership and for building equal opportunities. The *Ellas+* initiative has been chosen as a Best Practice Programme by the European Union.

Caregiving is closely linked to the *Ellas+* initiative. Both men and women need to be able to participate in caregiving, otherwise the obstacles faced by women to access leadership roles in various spheres will remain hidden. In Latin America, the aim is to boost the participation of different stakeholders in caregiving and not just the State, but also companies, trade unions, academia and civil society, among others.

Gender-specific projects go through a different call for proposals, i.e. the call for proposals is not made via NGOs. Instead, Spanish Cooperation Offices select the proposals and coordinate with those who are going to take part, which is why the offices opt for projects that are of adequate quality.

9. *Ellas+* - aecid.es

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Gender mainstreaming not only takes place in projects and programmes. It also happens when lines of action, commitments with partner countries and bilateral agreement tools, such as the Country Partnership Frameworks are identified, i.e. from the highest level of planning set out with each country, as this is what characterises the interventions in the country. Including gender in the Country Partnership Framework leads to specific gender elements being included in the development outcomes framework in the Country Programme. This is taken from the Country Partnership Framework and is the main strategic programming tool, identifying products and their respective indicators.

In addition, the gender approach is included in the Delegation Agreements, which stem from discussions on the purposes of delegated cooperation. The gender approach is also included in other instruments, such as capital and credit operations and programme aid.

Mainstreaming from the highest agreement levels with partner countries must be reflected in each of the actions in the field. To this end, the Sectoral Gender Guide emphasises that no action is gender neutral, and both the positive and negative impacts of interventions on the rights and lives of women, men, girls and boys must be taken into account.

In other words, all of AECID's interventions and sectors of action are involved, as the aim of cooperation policy is to ensure that women, adolescents and girls have free and equal access to basic social services, such as education and health, and to boost their professional integration, access to livelihoods and decent jobs.

In the rural development, food security and nutrition sector, consideration is being given to using guiding questions to help check whether the gender approach is being appropriately included. These questions ask about the gender division of labour, given that female producers generally do the toughest, most invisible and least profitable tasks, whether local farming knowledge and the practices of women and men are taken into account, if the role of women in family food subsistence is recognised and whether women's agricultural organisations have taken part in identification and decision making. Similarly, these questions ask whether actions respond to the specific infringed rights of rural women and whether the intervention's indicators can measure the impact of the project on closing the gender gap and whether they have been broken down by sex, ethnicity, location and age. Moreover, questions are included in the framework of intervention outcomes and impacts, i.e. whether greater control, use and access of women to agricultural resources and greater participation and decision-making of women in agricultural organisations are encouraged, whether a change in legislation or cultural standards that discriminate against women is advocated (ownership of and access to land, inheritance, participation in cooperatives, etc.), whether women's integration into paid work, welfare measures and higher-earning production activities is fostered, and whether the States ensure that women and girls have equal rights to ownership, accessing land, fishing and forests, regardless of their marital status and situation.

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Checks are made as to whether the gender approach is included in the implementation strategy and activities, verifying the actions targeted at men and women for generating changes in traditional roles in the medium-term (reproductive, health care and food security roles) in order to prevent them continuing, verifying whether shared responsibility for ensuring family well-being is fostered, and whether the gradual increase of women's agricultural work (in school gardens, community work, food collection, preparation, etc.) can be avoided, as it overloads women and prevents them from carrying out other activities.

Gender indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, should also be included in health issues. This should cover indicators on diseases affecting women and men in particular, access to health services for men and women, infant mortality broken down by sex, levels of family nutrition, highlighting sex and age, food distribution within the family, participation of men and women in family and/or community health, time spent by women and men on family and community health, and the existence and acknowledgement of health workers in the area.

In practice, gender mainstreaming is not so clear cut, particularly with regards food security and nutrition, where it has been more generic. Usually, the gender approach has been included during the analysis stage in preparation for diagnosis, where the variables allow for a breakdown by sex. It has also been included more tentatively in terms of objectives, indicators and outcomes in projects that are not gender specific. This would be the key to adequate mainstreaming, as this allows for the impact of gender itself on transformations in the field. This same description is valid for food security and nutrition, where the majority of components are focussed on nutrition with general information when the data is broken down by sex.

Limited staff numbers working at the AECID head offices is one of the main obstacles to mainstreaming and promoting the gender approach. As a result, it is difficult to include specific objectives in projects that require mainstreaming, as there are bilateral, multilateral and triangular projects. Spanish Cooperation Offices face the same problem, as the technicians are generalists. Gender training should be provided by the head offices, however the lack of human resources limits this recommendation.

Observations from the field emphasise the importance of working on three key elements in order to mainstream gender in nutrition projects: empowering women and education for women, girls and adolescents, which then strengthens decision-making in the household. Similarly, we can see that working with women in nutrition projects is key to achieving the transformations sought around the nutritional status of children.

Women's participation in local decision-making spaces is also encouraged. This applies to issues such as water and sanitation, political participation and in sectors such as health, nutrition and food security.

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The meeting point between gender and culture is also an area that should be highlighted. It is essential to push research that helps us understand cultural practices in the home. These practices are mainly performed by women and an understanding of the cultural patterns that explain these practices and how they can directly impact on nutritional status is key.

Another significant issue is preventing teenage pregnancy, which is one of the main causes of chronic undernutrition in some countries. This requires mechanisms to put an end to school drop-out rates among girls who become pregnant, prioritising prevention.

Other recommendations for mainstreaming actions include working on women's rights by empowering women economically, although the possible negative effects of this should be continuously assessed and actions to counteract these effects should be included. Economic empowerment may increase women's workloads and solutions that at first appear to encourage equality might subsequently fuel existing inequalities. One example is the pandemic and remote working. This situation meant that household chores could be divided between men and women and women could spend more time on their professional or job-related work.

The pandemic showed however that women took on even more domestic chores. An ongoing assessment of an action's impacts is a part of the gender approach that needs to be added to nutrition projects. This may involve introducing corrective elements to keep the project on track, as well as assessing feasibility and sustainability. One aspect of the gender approach is to assess how the project can continue to benefit women. It is therefore crucial to analyse the intervention context so as to avoid generating Western solutions that can be counter-productive later on.

By involving men, strategies that work on new concepts of masculinity to encourage men to take part in child-rearing, caregiving and housework, as well as schools for husbands, can be envisaged.

Gender mainstreaming in nutrition projects still has a long way to go and must begin by capitalising on the experiences and knowledge gained in the field. These specific contexts must be analysed so that possible strategies can be drawn up collectively.

KEY IDEAS IN THIS SECTION

- The core of AECID's work is the fight against poverty and inequality and the preferential treatment of vulnerable and excluded individuals.
- This vision of development is closely linked to the rights and basic freedoms approach to guarantee human rights.
- Spanish Cooperation has included a gender approach since 2005 and its track record and extensive experience in gender issues has made AECID a benchmark in this field.
- AECID approaches gender from two perspectives: specific and cross-cutting.
- Gender mainstreaming ranges from identifying lines of action in the Country Partnership Framework to programmes and projects.
- Although mainstreaming follows a set of established guidelines in management tools, in practice the path is not so clear cut. The issue of gender usually remains at a diagnostic level and is watered down in the implementation stage.
- Key elements for strengthening gender equity and nutrition include empowering women, women's education and encouraging women's participation in local decision-making.



**PAST, PRESENT
& FUTURE GLOBAL
NUTRITION FORUMS
AND AECID'S
INVOLVEMENT**

8

Nutrition is crucial to health and development¹⁰. Globally however, we are currently witnessing a steep increase in diseases linked to inadequate eating habits and, at the same time, complex threats to food security. This is no easy task. On the contrary, nutrition has become so multifaceted and global that solutions cannot be tackled in isolation, as access to sufficient, nutritious food requires a government response and also a response from the global community¹¹.

In this complex reality, the role of Global Nutrition Forums becomes even more relevant, as they seek global consensus in the midst of interconnected and complicated food systems that have a worldwide impact on nutrition and food. The search for global solutions is recent; the first UN milestone on food and nutrition came less than 100 years ago, in 1943 at the UN Conference on Food and Agriculture.

Below are details of the main landmarks in UN Global Forums on food and nutrition:

| NO. | YEAR | EVENT | DESCRIPTION |
|-----|------|---|--|
| 1 | 1974 | First World Food Conference | The World Food Council was created as a coordinating body to help agricultural ministries reduce malnutrition and hunger (dissolved in 1993). The Committee on World Food Security was a UN intergovernmental forum charged with studying the world food security situation, and reviewing and monitoring world food security policies. |
| 2 | 1977 | United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition | Set up by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a focal point for promoting standard nutrition policies and strategies across the entire United Nations system. |
| 3 | 1992 | First International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) World Declaration on Nutrition and Plan of Action | During the ICN, governments pledged to make every possible effort to eliminate or substantially reduce the following problems before the next millennium: death from starvation and famine; widespread chronic hunger; undernutrition, especially among children, women and the aged; micronutrient deficiencies, especially iron, iodine and vitamin A deficiencies; diet-related communicable and non-communicable diseases; impediments to optimal breast-feeding; and inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene and unsafe drinking water. |
| 4 | 1996 | World Food Summit Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action | World leaders met in Rome in November 1996 for the World Food Summit. The FAO called the summit in response to widespread undernutrition and to renew the global commitment to fight against hunger. |
| 5 | 2002 | World Food Summit: five years later | The World Food Summit: five years later, held from the 10 to the 13 June 2002, reaffirmed commitments to end hunger. The final document is: "Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later." |
| 6 | 2009 | Rome Statement on World Food Security | World leaders unanimously adopt a declaration recommitting themselves to eradicate hunger from the face of the earth at the World Summit on Food Security. |
| 7 | 2012 | RIO+20 - Zero Hunger Challenge | The Zero Hunger Challenge was launched by the United Nations Secretary-General to invite all countries to work for a future where every individual has adequate nutrition and where all food systems are resilient. |
| 8 | 2012 | Food Assistance Convention | The Food Assistance Convention is an international treaty adopted on 25 April 2012 in London. The aim of the treaty is to "address the food and nutritional needs of the most vulnerable populations". |

10. [Nutrition \(who.int\)](http://www.who.int)

11. [Nutrition – A global challenge for health | Tidsskrift for Den norske legeforening \(tidsskriftet.no\)](http://www.tidsskriftet.no)

| NO. | YEAR | EVENT | DESCRIPTION |
|-----|------|---|---|
| 9 | 2014 | Second International Conference on Nutrition | The Second International Conference on Nutrition was held in Rome, Italy in November 2014 and adopted the Rome Declaration on Nutrition, committing countries to eradicate hunger and prevent all forms of malnutrition worldwide. |
| 10 | 2015 | United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development: Objective 2 | The UN summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda was a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly held from 25 to 27 September 2015 in New York. Sustainable Development Goal 2 aims to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030. |
| 11 | 2016 | United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition | Adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/259, it calls on the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization to lead the implementation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), in collaboration with the World Food Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Nations Children's Fund, and to identify and develop a programme of work based on the Rome Declaration and its Framework for Action. |
| 12 | 2021 | Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G) | The first N4G Summit was held in London in 2013, where 100 stakeholders endorsed the Global N4G Compact and pledged more than \$4 billion in new nutrition-specific projects and \$19 billion in nutrition-sensitive projects. In 2021, N4G spearheaded the effort to end malnutrition in all its forms at the Tokyo N4G Summit, which focused on the critical roles of food, health and social protection systems in delivering good nutrition for all. |

Source: <https://research.un.org/en/foodsecurity/un-milestones>

Other spaces and movements for nutrition have also been opened up, such as the Scaling Up Nutrition and Nutrition for Growth initiatives.

Spain on the world stage:

Spain has chaired the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) since 2021. The committee was set up in 1974, reformed in 2009, and is the foremost international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. The CFS emphasises nutrition security, not just food security, and tackling malnutrition is currently part of all CFS' activities.

CFS' functions can essentially be broken down into three major aspects: reaching agreement on key issues relating to the realisation of the right to food, leading to negotiations that result in policy recommendations and voluntary guidelines. This is initially based on an independent report from the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN), a body created as a key part of the CFS to provide independent, science-based analysis and advice. Technical support is also provided by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and representatives of the CFS Advisory Group, when required. Following this technical, science-based report, a negotiation process starts, leading to consensus for the adoption of guidelines or policy recommendations on the matter in question.

It is important to note that the CFS addresses nutrition in all its negotiations, mainstreaming the issue in all its discussions. The guidelines on gender equality adequately illustrate this, as the role of women in creating healthy diets was included as a result of their economic and social empowerment.

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CFS' second function is to create a space for consultation, which does not necessarily result in an agreed product, but is a space for different countries and stakeholders to exchange views and to identify shared ideas and areas of conflict.

The third function is coordination, which does not necessarily translate into policy text. Coordinated action is favoured and the CFS serves as a space for initiatives such as Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) and the Decade on Nutrition to present and debate their results, allowing civil society, private, state and other actors to take part. The Committee stems from the human right to food and its mandate is to ensure that the voices of all those affected by poverty and food insecurity are heard, thus reinforcing full participation.

Another important actor in the nutrition field is Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN), a movement launched in 2012 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and led by 66 countries and 4 Indian States, collectively known as the SUN countries. It brings together a wide range of actors from society who are united to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030, thus promoting fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goal 2. The aim of the SUN Movement is to place nutrition at the top of global and national policy agendas. While AECID does not directly take part in the SUN Movement, Spanish Cooperation does through the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policy (FIIAPP), which is an entity of the Spanish Cooperation system specialised in promoting public policy.

FIIAPP has been implementing the EU4SUN project since it began in 2023. It is a Delegated Cooperation project with European Union funding. The project's main focus is malnutrition, which means that it offers a wide view of nutrition, i.e. water undernutrition, chronic malnutrition, hidden hunger, overweight and obesity, among other things.

EU4SUN is responsible for the cohesive and effective operationalisation of the SUN Strategy, and the monitoring of its results. To do this, there is dialogue with each of the countries, identifying their priorities and offering technical assistance in terms of strengthening public policy, implementing, building the capacity of civil servants, monitoring and assessment, all within the framework of the public policy cycle.

FIIAPP's focus is Latin America and it assists countries that are part of SUN so that the countries implement strategies that are linked to the N4G Summit commitments, putting the priorities into action. As a result of the progress made in Latin America, countries have focused their concerns on location, i.e. how to implement a public policy in a territory.

Localisation, or territorialisation, is an important factor in the actual implementation of public policy, from national to local level and even at household level.

At the public policy strategy level, FIIAPP interacts continuously with the Parliamentary Fronts, which support the project. The experience they have in managing policies and

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positioning malnutrition at this level leads to openness, as they are a significant platform for dialogue. The Parliamentary Fronts are not the only actor in these dialogues however, as the contribution of ministries, for example, is key to implementing public policies.

The Right to Food Observatories are another important platform, offering broader dialogue and advocacy on issues of interest within the context of malnutrition.

Likewise, AECID also has experience in working within the right to food framework. FIIAPP reiterates this commitment and positions this right within the EU4SUN framework through strong advocacy work.

By speaking with AECID about its experiences coordinating work in the fields of water, sanitation, health and production, FIIAPP has reiterated this multi-faceted vision of malnutrition held by AECID over the years. Experience is varied; the lessons learnt from the Parliamentary Fronts and their links with academia acknowledge a strategy drawn up on a global scale. This shows a close link to the human right to food and demonstrates that this right can be realised when it is driven by stakeholders in the territories themselves.

It is precisely this experience that leads to better proposals being created in areas where AECID participates indirectly. The major challenge facing AECID at this point is to manage knowledge in the field and to document this knowledge. This should happen from the most local level to the most national level, such as with the Parliamentary Fronts.

Despite the wealth of nutrition experience gained by AECID in the field as a result of the abovementioned initiatives, the agency has poor standing in global forums and does not take part. Knowledge management, through the documenting of success stories, insights and strategies used, is one of the first steps to achieving this standing. Documenting this knowledge not only benefits institutional learning, it also helps clearly identify key insights gained from the field experience. In order to manage knowledge, there must be communication between the Spanish Cooperation Offices working in countries and the head offices in order to identify the interventions that need documenting, but also to generate shared knowledge that feeds nutrition actions at both levels in a cohesive way.

In addition to knowledge management, AECID needs a clear position on its commitment to chronic undernutrition and the work on its determining factors, such as water, food security, gender issues, women's empowerment, access to education for women, and social welfare. The link between women's empowerment and education and improvements in children's nutritional status is widely known, and AECID has promoted gender issues for several years, achieving recognition and legitimacy in this area. It is still crucial however that the specific links between nutrition and gender, the ways they are approached and mainstreaming are dealt with specifically and documented in protocols or intervention guidelines. This will lead to a clear position with a strategic

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commitment to working on chronic undernutrition in the long-term, including its determinants, and which provides a clear, detailed and comprehensive strategy.

Knowledge management would enable AECID to provide systematised and documented proposals based on its experience and work contexts, using in-the-field solutions to effectively improve the nutritional status of the population and to incorporate knowledge of how to implement these solution in various contexts. This is vital, given that there is currently a big push for more multidimensional and multi-stakeholder visions on the issue of malnutrition. One example is the third phase of SUN (2021-2025), which has taken a more holistic view of issues and stakeholders, including sectors such as education, water, sanitation and climate change.

Progress in knowledge management is hindered by the limited number of technical staff at the Spanish Cooperation Offices. Additional staff would therefore be necessary.

Another major challenge facing AECID is to document its experience in gender issues and to link this experience to nutrition from a nutrition-sensitive gender perspective, given its extensive experience in both areas. This needs to be done urgently in the case of nutrition-sensitive production projects.



INSIGHTS

9

A. DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC VISION OF NUTRITION FOR GUIDING INTERVENTIONS IN THE FIELD:

Strategic Vision. The Strategic Vision on nutrition is reflected in the 2007 Strategy for Combating Hunger, which already contained some of the multidimensional elements of malnutrition, providing a broader perspective on nutrition that incorporates the multi-stakeholder effort. The Strategy has not been renewed. It was however innovative at the time and has elements that are still valid today. The new Master Plan continues with this legacy of a multidimensional and multi-stakeholder approach and clearly positions Spanish Cooperation in terms of nutrition, focusing the work not only on undernutrition, but on all forms of malnutrition, including overweight and obesity. It could be more ambitious however, with regards medium-term parliamentary and policy support interventions.

Despite these documents, there is still much room for AECID to clearly and emphatically state its position regarding its commitment to addressing nutrition. This is not a hollow commitment, but one that is based on years of experience and which needs to be duly communicated. Without specific AECID documents and a clear position on nutrition that is shared in different arenas, effective communication is not possible. This leaves gaps that may be attributed to there being no specific vision on nutrition.

Similarly, at the strategic level, the case must be made for integrating nutrition across all sectors:

“In 2000 we were talking about health in all policies. Well, what about nutrition in all policies? If we want to improve nutrition, we have to look at how we include it in many other projects and in many other interventions related to water and sanitation, to food and education, in relation to supplementary school meal projects for example, which can have an enormous impact on nutrition levels, and in food security and agriculture projects [...], etc”

Anonymous interview - Specialist 004

Changes to nutrition and mainstreaming perspectives in AECID interventions:

Perspectives on addressing nutrition have changed over time. An important milestone in this change has undoubtedly been the launch of The Lancet Series on maternal and child nutrition in 2008, which marks a before and after in these approaches. The evidence presented highlights the impacts of child nutrition on development, calling for the urgent need for specific nutrition interventions targeting vulnerable groups and highlighting the importance of interventions in the first 1,000 days of a child's life.

Approaches therefore moved away from a purely medical or health view linked to hunger as a deficiency, insufficient calorie intake and food aid. Moreover, nutrition was

dealt with in many fields, but without targeted interventions and without assessing its actual impact on development. Following the Lancet Series, a more holistic approach to nutrition was taken, with numerous contributing aspects being recognised, such as access to water and sanitation, production and access to food. Interventions with impact were prioritised.

Similarly, approaches to nutrition broadened with the spotlight on agrifood systems. Perhaps the trend of focussing only on nutrition and not on other determinants has faded, as we have come to understand that nutrition-sensitive actions, such as social welfare and agriculture, are also key.

Alongside The Lancet, international movements and NGOs have taken action to socially denounce injustices in the food system, the generation of poverty, monoculture farming and the standardisation of diets, acknowledging other elements in the food system impacting on nutrition.

Another major paradigm shift has been the move from undernutrition to malnutrition, which includes overweight, obesity and non-communicable diseases. This requires an extremely systemic and holistic way of working, not only in relation to the issues it addresses, but also the numerous actors involved in the food system, where nutrition plays a pivotal role.

These paradigm shifts are key to nutrition projects and programmes, which need to take on board new approaches and put them into action in the field.

AECID works from a multidimensional nutrition perspective and focuses on food security, integrating production, climate change, water and sanitation and health. The agency has vast experience working on nutrition from a systemic angle, focusing on its determining factors, as this allows nutrition to be addressed from a system-wide food approach. What is more, the agency's experience with gender issues and Spain's experience with social welfare can be capitalised on to generate nutrition-sensitive social welfare strategies and to mainstream gender across this field of work.

Concentrating nutrition actions on the first 1,000 days of a child's life, which includes pregnancy and the first two years, is extremely relevant and there is still room for AECID to prioritise resources in this key stage of life.

Interventions in Honduras and Guatemala, for example, currently cover nutrition over the first five years of life, which is partly aligned with national priorities that outline the work in this age group. These interventions could however be limited to the first 1,000 days, which would not only affect children's development, but would also deliver greater impact with efficiently allocated budgets.

DAC nutrition indicators

The basic nutrition code (12240) in the OECD's Data Explorer plans to report on funding in the following specific nutrition sub-sectors and interventions: "Direct feeding programmes (maternal feeding, breastfeeding and weaning foods, child feeding, school feeding); determination of micronutrient deficiencies; provision of vitamin A, iodine, iron, etc.; monitoring of nutritional status; nutrition and food hygiene education; household food security." Donors, such as AECID, can assign a project as if it were in the basic nutrition sector. Countries can score a project or programme on a primary or secondary basis using the CRS (Creditor Reporting System) nutrition code. A secondary score includes projects and programmes where basic nutrition is a significant component, but it is not the project's main objective. A health programme that includes a basic nutrition component could be given this code on a secondary basis, for example. Code 12240 is linked to SDG2:

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|------|------------------------|--|-----------|---|
| 2240 | Basic nutrition | End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture | Target 30 | Target 2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round. |
| 2240 | Basic nutrition | End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture | Target 31 | Target 2.2: By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons. |

Although the DAC WP-STAT working party reviews and approves code allocation, there are some problems in terms of the specific nature of the nutrition indicator to clearly define what type of nutrition interventions have been funded, and there is a risk of both over- and under-estimating the number of nutrition projects. The code sometimes includes nutrition-sensitive interventions that are not directly related to nutrition, leading to overestimates of nutrition-specific investment and underestimates of nutrition-sensitive interventions. Current purpose code 12240 excludes nutrition-specific interventions that are included elsewhere (thus underestimating nutrition-specific investments). Acción Contra el Hambre is pushing for a review of the CRS for nutrition so that, once the code is more specific and accurate, it not only leads to accountability, but also helps build strategies and encourage advocacy.

B. SUPPORT FOR AND ALIGNMENT WITH GOVERNMENT POLICIES

A core part of AECID's action is its commitment to strengthening government policies in the partner country. This responsibility is seen in three areas. Firstly, in the administrative agreements that set out the sectoral or action priorities, such as the Country Partnership Frameworks. These agreements identify the country-level priorities laid out in national plans or other national documents and sectoral priorities are then taken from and are aligned within this framework. Similarly, priorities are set in conjunction with the partner country, strengthening and respecting the institutional framework of public bodies, which is tremendously important when institutions are fragile. In these contexts, action must not only look at the interventions in the field, but also at the institutional context in which they are implemented.

A second area is direct support for nutrition and food security policies in the partner country. A good example of this is the Niger Spanish Cooperation Office's support for the 3N Initiative: "Nigériens Nourishing Nigériens", an initiative launched in 2012 in response to the challenge of food and nutrition insecurity in the country. Supporting this policy has been a priority and it has been one of the focal points of the Spanish Cooperation programme in the country.

“For a long time, Spanish Cooperation has also supported what was called the national mechanism for the prevention and management of food crises”

Interview with Spanish Cooperation Office in Niger

The third areas is advocacy, so that nutrition and food security issues can be put on the public agenda. By analysing the chronic undernutrition statistics in Cabo Delgado in depth, the Spanish Cooperation Office in Mozambique put actions aimed at reducing chronic undernutrition on the agenda of public institutions and those working in the field.

C. LEGISLATIVE FOOD AND NUTRITION INITIATIVES - WORKING WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS

The Parliamentary Fronts' innovative work over the years has resulted in significant impacts and learning.

1. This work has generated legislation on nutrition, addressing its multidimensional nature and enabling the stakeholders themselves to strengthen development, as they are the ones who decide which laws are a priority for the country, in conjunction with the technical support provided.
2. Addressing malnutrition in all its forms is at the core of the legislative framework put forward by the Parliamentary Fronts. This is essential in territories where the triple burden of malnutrition is becoming a reality, as it is in many of the countries in the global South. Working with parliamentarians also provides an opportunity to legislate for better food environments.
3. Nutrition becomes the focus of legislation, with other elements taking a back seat and the impact on nutritional status is prioritised. The legislation on school meals clearly illustrates this point. Previously, these laws prioritised portion costs over other aspects, including the impact on nutrition. The legislation now puts nutritional status at the centre of the issue, positively changing the focus.
4. Working with the Parliamentary Fronts supports the human right to food by strengthening the legislative capacity of one of the branches of government to ensure elements that contribute to the human right to food.
5. This experience boosts negotiating capacities and democracy, as partisan approaches are overcome and different political groups work together on shared technical objectives.
6. This work dynamic has generated changes in the way FAO works and has shown that south-south and south-north cooperation is possible.

Alliance between academia and the Parliamentary Fronts: Evidence-based policies

AECID's work with politicians, i.e. with parliamentarians, also raises the important point of using evidence-based scientific information as the basis for legislation. Working with universities is crucial to generating this information and to supporting parliamentarians in their work. Observatories provide a space for individuals in the academic world who are aware of the issues to work with both Latin America and the Caribbean and also Spain via the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger.

The Right to Food Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (RFO-LAC) generates studies, indicators and recommendations for the development, implementation and overseeing of legislation and/or public policies applied at local, national or regional level. The Human Right to Food in Spain Observatory (RFO-S) provides analyses on the

right to food in Spain, which can be used to influence public policy and ensure the enforceability of the right to adequate food and related issues (Lessons learnt and best practice in AECID's work with Parliamentary Fronts against hunger).

The alliance between AECID and the FAO to foster these observatories is closely linked to the Parliamentary Fronts and provides the necessary technical support. It also encourages academia to take part in technical and scientific proposals to address food insecurity-related issues, the human right to food and nutrition, prompting research and the active participation of researchers in finding solutions to these problems.

D. COORDINATING POLICIES AND TOOLS ON THE GROUND

The coordination of policies and tools on the ground is based on four elements: the territorial approach, the community approach, the multisectoral approach and training and capacity building in policy making and nutrition.

Enfoque territorial

The impact on nutrition is greatest when policies and programmes are coordinated in the territories. A territorial approach to nutrition and food security policies emphasises local dynamics, integrating nutrition initiatives with the “economic, technological, socio-political, cultural and environmental forces” at work in the territory, where the environment is influenced by geophysics and the individual and shared initiatives of social agents¹². Territorial nutrition development aims to generate production and institutional change in the territory¹³, moving away from centralised, sectoral and hierarchical decisions. Alternatively, a broad, holistic framework is proposed, taking full advantage of local capacities and the potential of regional and local governments to participate in policy making¹⁴. It is in the territory where “public policies come together and enhance each other and where needs can be prioritised and demands identified”. A territorial approach to nutrition brings policy and territory closer together, allowing policies to be adapted to the territory's characteristics, its actors and dynamics, as well as creating governance mechanisms and opening up spaces for participation to take place¹⁵.

12. ECLAC 2024 <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/territorial-development>

13. Schejtman, A., & Berdegué, J. A. (2004). Rural territorial development. *Working paper/Rural Territorial Dynamics Program. RIMISP-Latin American Centre for Rural Development; no. 4.* <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/39791/128577.pdf>

14. Cistulli, V., Rodríguez-Pose, A., Escobar, G., Marta, S., & Schejtman, A. (2014). Addressing food security and nutrition by means of a territorial approach. *Food security*, 6, 879-894.16. ECLAC 2024 <https://www.cepal.org/es/subtopics/territorial-development#>

15. Kato, K. Y. M., Delgado, N. G., & Romano, J. O. (2022). Territorial approach and rural development challenges: Governance, state and territorial markets. *Sustainability*, 14(12), 7105.

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AECID has driven this approach by supporting organisations such as FAO, and through its bilateral cooperation interventions to promote nutrition-related public policies. FAO worked with this approach around chronic child undernutrition, promoted by AECID.

“A project came up [...] which was mainly linked to implementing coordinated strategies in the territories to fight chronic child undernutrition and using a territorial approach, i.e. trying to ensure that policies reach the territories in a more coordinated way and have a greater impact”

Anonymous interview - Specialist 001

Similarly, Spanish Cooperation Offices take the same approach, as they believe that public actors and local civil society are best placed to act in the territory. In Mozambique for example:

“You have to bring everything to the territory-level, work with communities, assess all the causes and see who is affected by these problems so that performance can be improved. [...] especially because landing in communities like this, which are very distant and have very poor human development, you can see that this difference is accepted through community work and by understanding the territory, which, of course, should be done by the state, the only actor that can intervene at this level”

Interview with Spanish Cooperation Office in Mozambique

Community approach

In both acute and chronic undernutrition interventions, AECID has funded excellent experiences to promote community development by strengthening health systems at the community level.

“Strengthening health systems at a decentralised level, understanding that the work that has budgetary support at the state level has implications at the community level. [...] Resources have to be decentralised to the community level”

Anonymous interview - Specialist 002

A multisectoral response to the specific needs of communities requires policies to be adapted to these situations. In a fragile context such as Niger, for example, nutrition interventions have been rolled out within a community nutrition framework, which involves not only food assistance, but also diet diversification and prevention, covering all stages between emergency and nutritional development. In Guatemala, a successful multisectoral nutrition intervention in Sololá saw significant funds invested in water and sanitation at the community level, simultaneously fostering other lines of work: institutional strengthening, community strengthening, improving feeding using basic grains, and also climate change adaptation work in indigenous populations via NGOs.

The community structure can play an important role in nutritional monitoring. In Mozambique for example, positive models incorporate a community-based monitoring structure that:

“Links health centres with [nutrition] activists, leading to better techniques and better feeding processes being learnt”

Interview with Spanish Cooperation Office in Mozambique

It is crucial to coordinate policies locally and involve communities in implementing them, such as with school feeding legislation. It is also about understanding that communities are very varied and that families and households have very different needs. Furthermore, the multi-sectoral approach has to be extended to the household, ensuring that multidimensional interventions impact on the households suffering from malnutrition.

Multisectoral approach

Malnutrition is understood by AECID, both in the head offices and in the field, as being the result of numerous causes, both immediate and underlying, which manifest in different ways. Multisectoral nutrition programmes therefore aim to combat hunger beyond straightforward technical solutions, by working at the system level and acting in different sectors or fields simultaneously. This includes coordinating actions in the areas of water and sanitation, health, cash transfers, education, agriculture, food systems and short supply chains, etc. Nutrition interventions are designed:

“By being on the ground and knowing what should be done in each district to fight child undernutrition in each territory. The situation is not the same if the cause is health, or if the cause is access to water, or cultural issues. First of all, we have to identify the causes”

Spanish Cooperation Offices have vast experience of multisectoral interventions at a nutrition programme funding level. This includes SESAN's Multisectoral Action Plan to reduce chronic undernutrition¹⁶ and the programme created in Guatemala to:

“Tackle some of the most significant multisectoral aspects in reducing undernutrition. We’re not just talking about health, it’s also water and sanitation, access to food, economic development and climate change [...] Other areas also need attention, such as education, where we work indirectly”

Interview with Spanish Cooperation Office in Guatemala

At the head offices, however, the work of different teams involved in nutrition programmes can be coordinated. As explained below, there is tension between AECID's geographic and sectoral structures and, in addition, there are reduced staff numbers and limited coordination between sectoral offices in nutrition interventions: health, nutrition, water (sectoral role that has not been replaced), as well as the office for humanitarian action and gender.

Training and capacity building in policy making and nutrition

Capacity building in policy making and nutrition is central to AECID. The agency's programmes and projects therefore include actions at a civil service and public institution level. This aligns with the understanding that nutrition requires a multidimensional approach and action at a multi-stakeholder level.

Stakeholders in the territory are coordinated and organised by strengthening public institutions. This is done mainly at local or municipal government level, where the different sectors are coordinated to look after the most vulnerable households, with key interventions to improve nutrition status. One hurdle however is the level of decentralisation achieved in the country, as this impacts on flexible decision-making and budget allocation in line with the needs of each territory¹⁷.

Nationally, AECID takes part in multisectoral initiatives to coordinate nutrition policies, such as the Guatemalan Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Security (SESAN), which is an opportunity to achieve inter-ministerial coordination to address chronic undernutrition and food insecurity. Similarly, interventions such as the FIIAPP (International and Ibero-American Foundation for Public Administration and Policies) initiative, financed by AECID, works with Latin American countries, such as El Salvador and Peru, on nutrition policies, supporting them to prioritise and adapt interventions and training civil servants to implement them.

16. <https://es.scalingupnutrition.org/resource-library/national-plans/multisectoral-action-plan-reduction-chronic-undernutrition>

17. Interview with Spanish Cooperation Office in Guatemala and Spanish Cooperation Office in Honduras

“We have opted for adaptation, bringing public policy down to a territorial level [...] El Salvador has prioritised breastfeeding, and we have provided our support to bring the legislation down to the territories, down to the local level. The details of the legislation should be understood at the local level, so local civil servants are trained in the exclusive breastfeeding approach”

Anonymous interview- Specialist 003

Despite this, there are some limitations that suggest interventions also need to be rolled out at the national level. These interventions aim to strengthen programmes and projects by providing technical and managerial support, as well as financial and budgetary assistance so that the resources invested reach households.

AECID has also played an essential role in building the capacities of parliamentarians and advisors through the open courses offered in alliance with the FAO, the Parliamentary Front Summits and other initiatives where countries can swap learning and experiences.

To summarise, capacity building in public institutions reveals significant insights for nutrition projects. Strengthening, for example, should be multi-level, especially if changes to budget allocations are wanted, as in some cases, sub-national governments have poor decision-making power over the goods and services that are purchased in their territory (Spanish Cooperation Office in Guatemala). Furthermore, inter-institutional coordination must be strengthened in order to address malnutrition from a multidimensional, multi-stakeholder approach.

E. NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS ON THE GROUND

Context analysis-based nutrition interventions

There is consensus across the Spanish Cooperation Offices of the importance of specific context at territorial and community level. This means understanding and incorporating political, economic and socio-cultural aspects affecting malnutrition and the interventions launched to combat them. The context has to be analysed and adaptations made in terms of designing, implementing and monitoring interventions. Humanitarian action, for example, requires communication with those in the field and adapting nutrition interventions, as a one-size-fits-all model is not appropriate:

“It is crucial to listen and to know how to really see what is going on and not just to repeat actions”

Anonymous interview - Specialist 004

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An understanding of the nutrition and agrifood system context is fundamental, as is an understanding of social and anthropological dynamics. In Mozambique, for example:

“Being in the territory, you need to know in each district what can be done to fight child undernutrition in each territory, because the situation is not the same if the cause is health, access to water, cultural issues, etc. First we would have to identify and prioritise the causes. [...] You have to look at the context starting from a general perspective and ending with a specific perspective [...] it’s multisectoral. We can't just look at it from one point of view”

Interview with Spanish Cooperation Office in Mozambique

Cultural differences often play a significant role in nutrition habits, which have an impact even when income and access to food are adequate. Health and nutritional anthropology are important tools when identifying these processes and helping redesign programmes to adapt them to local traditions. If necessary, discussions need to be started to encourage changes in eating habits towards more nutritious diets. In Niger, for example:

“Not all communities are the same. There are cultural issues that, in my opinion, are very important in how food is distributed, even within one ethnic group or another. All these factors have to be analysed and understood in advance in order to provide an adequate response”

Interview with Spanish Cooperation Office in Niger

Very often, the industrialisation of agriculture, urbanisation and the consequent loss of traditional diets have been responsible for monotonous, contemporary diets. In central Nicaragua for example, there was a tradition of using yucca leaves in cooking, which has been lost, and in Peru, blood was used. Anthropology has been used to identify both the reasons for less nutritious diets and also to recover traditional recipes that can be included in nutrition programmes.

Gender-based interventions

At AECID, gender is addressed in two ways; one is through specific gender interventions, where the objectives are direct changes to gender-linked aspects, and the second is gender mainstreaming, where the intervention’s objectives are different from the gender issue, such as, climate change, nutrition or food security, but where mainstreaming is key to achieving the necessary changes in gender and in the intervention framework.

Nutrition interventions incorporate a gender approach via actions such as women's economic empowerment, workshops for women, parenting schools and working on new concepts of masculinity. Although these actions go back several years, insights into gender mainstreaming have not been capitalised on. Limited staff numbers at the head offices mean that nutrition projects are not monitored for proper gender mainstreaming, and so sometimes it is not possible to adequately contextualise the approach, nor incorporate it beyond a diagnostic level¹⁸.

A fundamental lesson is the need to generate knowledge by documenting insights on gender issues, as this would provide information on key interventions in the field, the contexts in which they've been implemented and the outcomes.

Moreover, adequate gender indicators in nutrition projects are key to truly identifying whether impacts are being generated in terms of gender transformations that help improve nutritional status and food.

Another relevant insight is the need to increase the skill set of the technicians working at the Spanish Cooperation Offices by providing gender training or the opportunity to exchange experiences. This would go some way to remedy the lack of specialist staff in this field on the ground.

Bilateral support (e.g. in food security and nutrition policies) combined with NGO funding

NGOs enable this territorial approach and understand the situations in communities. Funding helps with coordination and cross-cutting actions at the local level. Furthermore, NGOs are the “eyes” of cooperation, providing Spanish Cooperation Offices with an analysis of the actual situation and changes to it. This is particularly important in countries where there is conflict. In Niger, for example:

“Linking it to context security, it is increasingly difficult to contextualise, you have to understand, you have to know the lie of the land and not just talk to NGOs and people on the ground. Sometimes in our agency, depending on who is in charge of each country, bilateral actions are prioritised over other types of actions that in the end give you more context [...] In the agency, we learn the most at a nutrition level from those who implement the interventions, the NGOs, UNICEF... But for that you have to talk with them and for that [you need to finance them]”

Interview with Spanish Cooperation Office in Niger

18. Interview with Spanish Cooperation office in Guatemala, Spanish Cooperation Office in Niger, Spanish Cooperation Office in Honduras and Spanish Cooperation Office in Mozambique

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NGDOs have played a fundamental advocacy role worldwide in moving away from the idea that nutrition is a purely technical or medical problem, and bringing it within a broader critique of food systems, leading (in collaboration with social movements) to a common complaint about:

“The unfair food system and the poverty it generates, as well as monocultures, etc. and the unification of diets and everything else. The impact of those models on proper nutrition was already being considered, but the need for a diversified, varied diet, where access to food does not necessarily guarantee human development, so to speak, was certainly on the table”

Anonymous interview- Specialist 005

Interventions that break the cycle of malnutrition - structural changes and programmes for local nutrition solutions

AECID's nutrition intervention logic has always been linked to the determinants of malnutrition, such as poverty, inadequate water and sanitation, agricultural production, gender and other aspects, like climate change, have gradually been introduced. Interventions have therefore been multidimensional, targeting the generation of cultural transformations. This is linked to the territories where the agency operates, as in these regions, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, chronic undernutrition, not acute undernutrition, is predominant. As a result, and thanks to its experience in rural development and food security, its interventions incorporate these transformations.

Medium-term interventions are needed and must be paired with funding instruments that allow for this timeframe. Multi-year funding programmes for work with parliamentarians and tools, such as NGDO agreements, allow AECID aid recipients to generate a greater impact:

“We must accommodate nutrition treatments [for acute undernutrition]. [...] There needs to be consistency from year to year, so that we can have a bigger impact, can be more relevant [...] And it can vary a little [...]. At the agency, we need medium-term strategies that are backed up by resources and means, because that is also what will allow us to position ourselves as an agency at the issue level, at the sectoral level and in international forums”

Interview with Spanish Cooperation Office in Niger

“For nutrition [...], the obvious success stories are the agreements. Agreements enable you to clarify a process over time and update it. [...] In Peru, for example [...] [we] had a formula for chronic malnutrition, which we found extremely interesting. The flexibility afforded by the agreement mechanism allowed us to change the entire way we’ve been working and work on a completely different project”

Anonymous interview- Specialist 006

This same vision of nutrition is fostered in the territories affected by acute undernutrition, where there is a current drive to build resilience. The work developed around livelihoods is therefore fundamental, as is the identification and fostering of local solutions, including those for the treatment of acute undernutrition. In Niger, for example, local flour is being given a boost to reinforce child nutrition, given that dependence on ready-to-use foods and conflict causes the price of these products to increase, thus affecting access to them.

There is no specific programming or financial leverage against malnutrition in terms of obesity and non-communicable diseases.

Overweight and obesity have increased strikingly since 1990. By 2022, 43% of adults aged 18 and over were overweight and 16% obese, and 37 million children under 5 were overweight¹⁹. These concerning figures should push official development assistance to integrate dual actions into projects and programmes, i.e. actions to reduce undernutrition and to simultaneously create impacts on actions to reduce excess weight. Investments aimed at preventing or reducing overweight, obesity and non-communicable diseases are however cautious. This is an ongoing feature of international cooperation and is not unfamiliar to AECID. AECID has however taken innovative steps to address the issue by collaborating with the Parliamentary Fronts, who have pushed through legislation that encourages healthy eating and food labelling, which are directly linked to preventing overweight and obesity, encouraging the population to choose ultra-processed foods less often. Furthermore, Spanish Cooperation’s Sixth Master Plan prioritises ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition: combating food insecurity (chronic, transitory or seasonal), combating obesity, overweight and undernutrition and clearly integrating a broad vision of malnutrition.

These advances need local links in the territories, where the regulations can be disseminated, or actions can be taken to encourage healthy eating. The challenge facing AECID is therefore to incorporate dual actions into all the interventions it launches at the territorial level and to promote them from Spanish Cooperation as a whole. Likewise, the Parliamentary Fronts need ongoing support to prepare legislation that creates adequate food environments for good nutrition

19. [Obesity and overweight \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int)

F. INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT OF NUTRITION AT AECID

AECID's presence in the territory

A key strength is undoubtedly the extensive network of units on the ground, such as the Spanish Cooperation Offices, training hubs and cultural centres.

Spanish Cooperation Offices provide first-hand knowledge of the actual situation in each country and territory they act in, and insights are generated from the projects implemented. These insights hold great potential when it comes to drawing up proposals for global nutrition forums.

Knowledge management limitations at the agency level

The head offices, those in the field, NGOs and experts all unanimously believe that AECID's knowledge management is a missed opportunity. Knowledge management is the practice of capturing, storing and sharing knowledge so that we can learn lessons from the past and apply them to the future²⁰. Learning in the field of nutrition, i.e. best practice, insights, tools for adapting interventions to the context, opportunities and barriers, etc., are not gathered or shared. Similarly, Cooperation Offices, those working in the field and the head offices have no opportunities for analysis beyond project-level assessments, which are rarely used to generate wider learning. There is a lack of staff (at the head offices and in the field), and limited time allocated to this type of activity.

“The agency has a poor memory, [...], we don't know, we don't have a culture of knowledge management. Cautious steps are being taken. And this means that we have a very poor memory, that things are sometimes salvaged, because you were passing by and at that moment you remember that such and such a thing was done here. Isn't that so? That is why it is so important for the institutions to lead all these processes. Because they can remember when and what was done here. [If not] you end up thinking, “I had this exact conversation here ten years ago!”

Interview with Spanish Cooperation Office in Niger

The sectoral office for rural development, food security and nutrition has made efforts to document experiences by preparing guides (including this one), which is a good step forward. A system that facilitates experience sharing and organisational learning needs to be added alongside these initiatives and integrated into the agency's routine activities.

20. UNDP 2007 <https://fsnnetwork.org/gtranslate/gtranslate.php?glang=es&gurl=resource/knowledge-management-toolkit-crisis-prevention-and-recovery-practice-area>

Furthermore, the network of food security and nutrition experts has the potential to connect academics and development workers so that they can share their experiences and keep up to date with the latest nutrition trends and research. Professional networks of this kind require financial and human resources to be successful.

Sectoral and geographic perspectives at AECID:

The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation is made up of geographic directorates: Directorate for Cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean, Directorate for Cooperation with Africa and Asia. There are also issue-related directorates, including the Directorate for Multilateral, Horizontal and Financial Cooperation, comprising the Department of Sectoral Cooperation, the Department of Non-Governmental Development Organisations and the Department of Multilateral Cooperation, among others. There is currently a restructuring process underway to enable the agency to respond to cooperation's characteristics and need.

Previously, the agency had prioritised a sectoral vision, which was in line with the recommendations of the Development Assistance Committee, where a sectoral and geographic vision was encouraged. The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) is currently undergoing a restructuring process to improve its capacity to respond to development cooperation needs. AECID's structure has traditionally combined geographic and issue-based directorates. It is however moving towards creating issue-based funds, and this has generated the need for a clear strategy to allocate these funds and coordinate the sectoral and geographic perspectives²¹.

Beyond the sectoral and geographical aspect, internal coordination is key to lending the integrated territorial approach a sectoral edge, meaning that internal coordination mechanisms and decision-making and monitoring strategies require both perspectives in an integrated manner. Internal coordination should seek to highlight and generate internal connections in terms of what is done rather than where it is done and thus be able to respond to the complex development challenges and actions required by the 2030 Agenda²².

Coordination of this kind also requires a technical team to provide ongoing organisation and regular evaluations of integrated sectoral progress in the territories. Any restructuring must take this aspect into consideration with regards response capacity, in light of the lack of specialised professionals in key areas of development investment²³.

21. AECID - The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation

22. Microsoft Word - o1 REFORMA_AECID_Informe_GT_Capacidades_junio_2021 (consejocooperacion.es)

23. Microsoft Word - o1 REFORMA_AECID_Informe_GT_Capacidades_junio_2021 (consejocooperacion.es)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

10

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Create systems for learning and sharing experiences within AECID and with other professionals in the sector and in the field, in partnership with academia. A comprehensive knowledge management system for food security and nutrition should focus on capturing, sharing and using experiences and insights from programmes and initiatives. The system should help cross-sectoral working, promote innovative approaches and ensure that valuable knowledge can be accessed to inform future policies and programmes. Mechanisms for documenting best practice, aiding knowledge sharing between stakeholders and disseminating findings to a wider audience must be built in to the system.

- Develop standardised tools and guidelines for documenting insights and experiences from projects and programmes.
- Set up a centralised platform or database to store and organise all knowledge products, making them easily accessible to relevant stakeholders.
- Organise regular knowledge-sharing activities, such as workshops, peer-to-peer exchanges and online forums to promote the sharing of experiences and best practice.
- Create cross-cutting documents and case studies analysing multi-sectoral approaches and innovative strategies for tackling food security and nutrition challenges.
- Actively take part in and contribute to global initiatives and movements (such as Scaling Up Nutrition) to stay abreast of the latest developments in the field.
- Introduce a system for measuring and documenting political commitment and policy changes relating to food security and nutrition, so that progress can be monitored and future advocacy efforts reported on.
- Deploy nutrition experts; nutrition experts should join the expert generalists at the head offices and Spanish Cooperation Offices, either as staff or recruited to take part in projects, increasing the capacities of AECID staff at head offices and in the Spanish Cooperation Offices.

USING FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO INCENTIVISE AND PROMOTE POLICY AND CROSS-SECTORAL WORKING AND COORDINATION IN TERRITORIES

These strategies would include creating multisectoral alliances, using mixed funding and rolling out coordinated nutrition programmes at the local level. These actions seek to improve coordination between different sectors and government levels to comprehensively address nutrition challenges.

- Multi-year, multisectoral nutrition funds: Create specific funds for nutrition projects that involve multiple sectors.

- **Public-private alliances:** Fostering partnerships between governments, companies and NGOs to finance nutrition initiatives.
- **Microfinance:** Offering micro-loans to local communities to finance sustainable nutrition projects.
- **Training local civil servants:** Providing nutrition training at the municipal level.
- **Mapping local actors:** Identifying and documenting decentralised cooperation practices in regions.
- **Community participation:** Involving the community in the planning and execution of nutrition projects.
- **Creating alliances with municipalities and other local governments** to execute SDG2 at the local level.
- **Using pilot projects in municipalities** to test and adjust strategies before scaling them up.
- **Incorporating a conflict management approach** to nutrition work in countries where there is intra- or inter-community conflict.

BUILDING CAPACITY AND RESOURCES FOR CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

A development cooperation agency working in the field of nutrition has to build capacity and resources for context analysis. To do this, internal skills need to be developed and recruited in order to understand the specific political, economic, social and cultural factors leading to a particular context. Either temporary or permanent applied anthropologists should be recruited and existing staff trained in context analysis. Moreover, long-term partnerships with academics are key to ensuring a holistic and sustainable approach.

- **Recruiting experts:** Adding anthropologists for contextual analysis either by recruiting AECID staff or as part of the recruitments needs of nutrition projects.
- **Continuous development:** Offering regular training in context analysis and socio-cultural analysis to AECID employees working on nutrition projects.
- **Academic partnerships:** Arranging partnerships with universities and research centres.
- **Regular assessments:** Performing regular context assessments so that strategies can be adjusted.
- **Community participation:** Engaging local communities in the contextual analysis process by using participatory and ethnographic techniques in nutrition projects.

MEDIUM-TERM FINANCING TO ENSURE PROGRAMME CONTINUITY AND IMPACT

Exploring multi-year programmes to support the work carried out and flexible, multi-year interventions, such as NGDO agreements, etc.

Spanish Cooperation Offices can participate to a greater extent in partner countries, providing points of view and guidance on EC project funding. This would complement existing interventions and ensure impact continuity until the territories have “graduated”.

Ensuring complementary basic interventions in the territories, so that households can receive key interventions to improve nutrition and adequate impact can be generated.

BALANCING DIFFERENT ACUTE AND CHRONIC UNDERNUTRITION AND MALNUTRITION PRIORITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPANISH COOPERATION'S STRENGTHS FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT: SETTING UP PRIORITY MECHANISMS IN NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS

The nutrition experts and actors interviewed praise the work on chronic undernutrition, where there is historical expertise and institutional relationships and capacities to address these problems, particularly in Latin America (FAO, Gabriel Ferrero, Spanish Cooperation Offices). Others recommend that AECID focus its efforts on acute undernutrition however, particularly in African countries, which are increasingly being forgotten by official development assistance due to geostrategic changes. Similarly, the epidemic of non-communicable diseases related to malnutrition pushes forward in countries receiving Spanish aid. A priority mechanism at AECID level therefore needs to be set up as part of the next strategy to fight hunger. This would build on AECID's previous work and expertise where it is well positioned to generate impact. Spanish Cooperation is just one of the global actors in the nutrition field, and it must find its own space and not try to do everything. The key is to consciously decide on AECID's nutrition “niche” and to coordinate and align this niche with other actors and donors (e.g. the European Union). Furthermore, it is not a decision between acute and chronic hunger, as there are programmes (such as USAID, Germany and Switzerland) that combine interventions against acute and chronic undernutrition and non-communicable diseases related to nutrition.

AECID's experience in rural development, food security and nutrition suggests that the following aspects should be incorporated beyond the discussion on chronic undernutrition or water:

- Working on medium- and long-term actions, strengthening livelihoods to stop households from falling back into conditions that lead to undernutrition in children.

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- Strengthening and helping transform the determinants of malnutrition, such as access to safe water and sanitation, women's education, women's empowerment and production linked to diet diversification, among others.
- Including dual actions, i.e. undernutrition and overweight and obesity.
- Bringing undernutrition to the territory level by identifying which territories within a country need actions for chronic undernutrition, acute undernutrition or both.

International standing

The aim is to highlight what has worked consistently for Spanish Cooperation and where there have been major impacts. Spain has enormous experience in working with nutrition from a multidimensional approach and has the advantage of being located in the field, providing it with first-hand learning. Limited knowledge management and learning channels, however, prevent AECID from using these first-hand insights in its nutrition proposals and actions. This is why learning channels and insights need to be set up and systematised so that they become a part of the proposals presented by Spain at the international level.

Despite these limitations, AECID has been a part of innovative experiences putting forward solutions to malnutrition and its determinants. Spain is therefore able to drive approaches and interventions so that other countries can finance and undertake them. Below are some of AECID's strengths that should be nurtured in global forums:

- Working with public institutions: institutional and public nutrition policy support.
- The right to food framework, as a way of guaranteeing nutrition.
- Importance of gender-specific interventions in nutrition and gender mainstreaming.
- Importance of the community and household approach: long-term interventions, tailored to specific contexts that are integrated into public policies as part of territorial development.

AECID's approaches to and advocacy of nutrition in global forums need to be matched by financial commitments in the sectors and for the types of intervention being driven.

Aspects to be integrated into interventions

AECID's nutrition projects aim to strengthen local governments' agendas and actions by coordinating and strengthening opportunities for dialogue. To achieve this, knowledge and tools must be improved so that nutrition can be addressed by sub-national governments. Their management capacity and the use of these tools must also be strengthened, so that local governments can lead these processes. This occurs in countries where decentralised decision-making processes are not yet consolidated and local decisions are influenced by the degree of decentralisation at

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national level. Projects must therefore propose actions at central government level that seek to strengthen local processes.

Alongside specific actions, this strategy would strengthen management at ministerial level, improving nutrition management.

AECID's experience in middle-income countries highlights the need for dual actions, i.e. actions to reduce and prevent undernutrition, and others to reduce and prevent overweight and obesity. These needs have been reflected in the legislation pushed forward by the Parliamentary Fronts, but they are not included in the interventions.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, where work with the Parliamentary Fronts has led to legislation improving food and nutrition, links between interventions in the field and the Parliamentary Fronts' actions need to be reinforced. On-the-ground experience can be used to propose legislation that nurtures the work of parliamentarians, feeding back into the enacting of this legislation on the ground.

These links should be extended to the right to food observatories, incorporating research and connecting with the needs identified in the territories. This will guide the research undertaken and explain the myths, traditions and other aspects that affect nutrition and other related issues.

Implementing new projects

Since Spanish Cooperation Offices play a significant and permanent role in the countries, they have a vast understanding of the actual situation. The territories requiring investment to improve nutrition can be swiftly identified and the types of intervention required and nutrition determinants to be addressed can be pinpointed. This is a considerable strength, which could lead to the territories requiring nutrition interventions and their priorities being agreed in advance. The interventions put forward in new calls for proposals would respond to the needs of the territories and to a strategy of incremental interventions around the determinants of nutrition, which together respond to long-term and multidimensional interventions.

Evaluating progress

Projects usually include funding for evaluations that assess the impact and effectiveness of interventions in relation to the objectives set. Where work is carried out under the framework of the Nutrition Programme, regular evaluations are key to determining whether projects are helping improve the nutritional status of the population.



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