

FACTSHEET



JOINT PROGRAMME ON INTEGRATED NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE GROUPS IN VIET NAM

The issue:

While Viet Nam has achieved a significant reduction in malnutrition among under-five children during the last three decades, malnutrition remains a public health priority. There are important differences in food patterns between the highlands, midlands and mountainous areas, between urban and rural areas, and between ethnic groups. Many maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) core outcomes, such as like maternal mortality, child mortality and child malnutrition rates, are lagging behind in these areas compared to the rest of Viet Nam, especially among poor and disadvantaged groups.

Underweight and stunting rates among under-five children are 19% and 32% respectively (National Nutrition Survey 2009) and it has been estimated that 27% of mothers with under-five children suffer from chronic energy deficiency.

Vulnerable groups face the challenges of higher food prices, impacts from the financial crisis and natural disasters. Short-term responses include improving the coverage and sustainability of critical health and nutrition interventions. Longer-term actions must tackle the underlying causes of poor nutrition, including income levels and access to adequate quantities of a variety of good quality foods.

The joint programme:

- The joint programme aims to address the continuing high prevalence of malnutrition among the most vulnerable, with a focus on stunting reduction and preventing future malnutrition.
- In accordance with the National Project for Food Security to 2020 with a Vision to 2030 - the ongoing strategy for support and protection of vulnerable groups through better nutrition - the joint programme will work at both the national and provincial level, targeting several selected provinces, including Cao Bằng, Điện Biên, Đắk Lắk, Kon Tum, Ninh Thuận and An Giang. These provinces were selected based on their high levels of stunting (prevalence rates and numbers) as well as the presence of related on-going activities and the capacity of agencies at the field level to implement programme activities.
- Short-term measures to address malnutrition include breastfeeding and complementary feeding, as well as iron and Vitamin A supplementation. The target groups for interventions are under-five children, women of reproductive age and pregnant women. Children will benefit from improved breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices provided by their mothers or child care provided, which will be

KEY FACTS

BUDGET: USD 3,550,000

Of which:

- MDG Fund (Spain): **USD 3,500,000**
- Government contribution: **USD 50,000**

PROGRAMME DURATION: 2010 – 2012

UN PARTICIPATING AGENCIES:

FAO, UNICEF, WHO

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

- Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MARD)
- Ministry of Health (MOH)
- Rural Development Centre (RUDEC)
- IEC/Health Education Centre of MOH

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES:

- Selected provinces of Viet Nam, including Cao Bang, Dien Bien, Dak Lak, Kon Tum, Ninh Thuan and An Giang
- Provincial Health Departments and Reproductive Health Centres
- Women of reproductive age and under-five children

demonstrated through measurable improvements in health education, promotion and counseling activities and improved homestead food production.

- Long-term policies and strategies that improve the quality of diets through the increased availability of better crops and animal source foods (meat, milk and fish) are an integral part of the programme. The programme includes activities for strengthening information and mapping systems, including nutritional sentinel surveillance, food security and early warning systems, and market information structures.
- Capacity building through training programmes for stakeholders at various levels from the provincial to community level is a key component and building block for the implementation of the programme.
- All project outputs contribute to improving the quality of social and protection services universally available to all Vietnamese people and to strengthening policymaking and institutional capacity towards more inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Unique features:

- An important and unique strength of the joint programme is the number and diversity of UN agencies, government stakeholders and public or private institutions involved in addressing food insecurity and malnutrition in Viet Nam.
- The design of the programme is based on the request of the government under the National Project for Food Security to 2020 with a Vision to 2030 and National Nutrition Strategy for 2001-2010.
- Involvement of government ministries will be a key strategy throughout the programme, especially during year one. Strong government ownership, leadership and commitment, combined with participatory community-based actions, are key factors in ensuring that interventions are sustained beyond the life of the programme.

Key outcomes:

1. Improved monitoring systems for food and for the health and nutrition status of mothers and children, which will be used to guide food, health and nutrition-related policies, strategies and actions.
2. Improved infant and young child feeding practices, including increased compliance with UNICEF/WHO guidelines on exclusive breastfeeding from 0-6 months and appropriate complementary feeding for children aged 6-24 months.
3. Reduction of micronutrient deficiencies in targeted children and women.
4. Improved care and treatment for children with severe malnutrition and improved nutrition services for young children in emergency situations.
5. Improvement in the availability, access and consumption of a more diverse food supply in selected highland and mountainous regions in Viet Nam.

As such, the programme will contribute to the achievement of MDG 1 on ending poverty and hunger, MDG4 on reducing newborn and under-five mortality, and MDG5 on reducing maternal morbidity and mortality.

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This joint programme is funded by the Spanish MDG Achievement Fund



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