

Recipe for Success: Accelerating Nutrition Governance

REPORT ADDENDUM

In 2021, CRS conducted policy research examining how existing U.S. government (USG) policies, systems, and structures enable or hinder the localization of the USG’s nutrition programming and the nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific approaches implemented by USG-funded actors. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) finalized the research report in October 2021 and released it publicly in December alongside [Nutrition for Growth](#), a summit to generate political and financial commitments to nutrition. After the conclusion of the research, relevant policy updates were released including:

- a refreshed USG [Global Food Security Strategy](#);
- new [commitments to localization](#) announced by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Samantha Power; and
- an updated USG [Global Nutrition Coordination Plan](#).

The global nutrition community also participated in the United Nations (UN) Food Systems Pre-Summit and UN Food Systems Summit, and as previously mentioned, held Nutrition for Growth. Given these intervening events and building on the momentum of global commitments to accelerating nutrition outcomes, CRS held a roundtable session in late January 2022 to discuss how to mobilize these commitments and improve localization of nutrition programming from a nutrition governance lens. Present at the roundtable were nutrition implementers, researchers, advocacy professionals, and a USAID Mission representative. Key themes during the discussion included:

- **Coordination:** donors and implementers must include host country governments and align to their national nutrition strategies, reduce siloes across sectors, and work through existing national and subnational coordination structures to reduce redundant efforts. Participants also noted the need for clear roles and responsibilities for coordinating nutrition programming.
- **Capacity:** host country governments may not have the resources required for capacity strengthening, or once nutrition professionals are trained, they may be relocated elsewhere, leading to a lack of institutional knowledge. In other cases, professionals may be overtrained, given the lack of a system to track and monitor capacity.
- **Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL):** nutrition requires more detailed indicators to measure the impact and more time; donors frequently focus solely on inputs and outputs as indicators. Also, more funding is needed to strengthen and streamline multi-sectoral MEAL systems and to measure the long-term impact of nutrition programs. Ex-post evaluations will help the nutrition community better understand long-term impacts, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic; further investment in these evaluations is needed.

CRS also met with USAID representatives to discuss feedback on the report in January 2022. USAID provided the following feedback on CRS' policy recommendations:

- **Funding pilots of Tufts University's Nutrition Governance Index:** USAID is piloting the Index in another country.
- **Expanding the USAID Advancing Nutrition project to additional countries:** USAID clarified that it is at the discretion of the Mission, not USAID headquarters, to buy into the USAID Advancing Nutrition project.
- **Creating country-specific, multi-sectoral nutrition strategies to help each USAID Mission operationalize and track nutrition programming across the various USG programs:** USAID nutrition priority countries will have multi-sectoral nutrition plans for internal use. Emergency nutrition and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education programming are not planned to be included in these multi-sectoral plans, at this time.
- **Provide additional clarity on the Refine & Implement (R&I) process, allow flexibility in initiating project activities earlier and improve the sharing of data collected through R&I:** USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) has created documents to support R&I processes, including an overview and frequently asked questions document. Further, BHA now has an institutionalized process to share R&I information in year 1 of all resilience food security activities.