

NICARAGUA

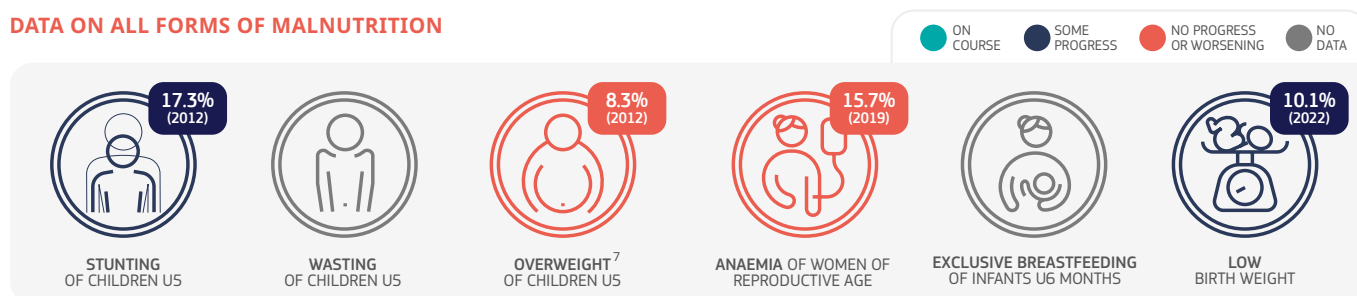
Nutrition situation in Nicaragua

AT A GLANCE

Nicaragua, with a population of 6.99 million people¹, is one of the poorest countries in Latin America, and experiencing economic difficulties due to a constant socio-political crisis. Undernourishment has improved, yet the prevalence of chronic undernutrition (14.9%) is higher than the average for the Latin America and Caribbean region (11.5%²). About 1.2 million people, nearly one in five, are undernourished³, which ranks among the worst nutrition situations in Central America. Drivers of undernourishment include frequent natural hazards and the effects of climate change, mainly in rural areas. Malnutrition and food insecurity is particularly associated with

poverty. Around 17% of GDP and 31% of total employment relies on agriculture, the primary source of livelihoods for 90% of the rural population⁴. Persisting structural gender inequalities are preventing women's access to agricultural markets and resources and land ownership. The impact of climate change and environmental degradation particularly affect women and girls, representing 80% of displaced people⁵. Women and children are also more affected by malnutrition and diseases related to water than men⁶. Nicaragua has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.397 and is ranked at 97 of 166 countries in 2022.

DATA ON ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION



The data reported in the 2023 EU Nutrition Country Profiles is drawn from the UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates and the Global Nutrition Report (GNR).

NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

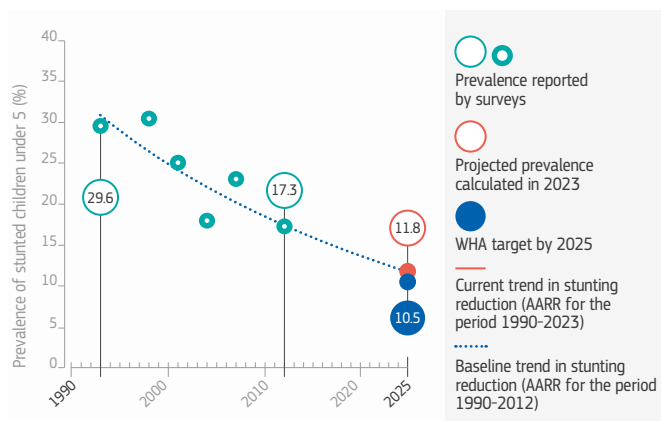
- Nicaragua's current National Development Plan 2022-2026 (NDP) presents the country's overall policy priorities and objectives. Nutritional targets include by sectors: education – school meals for 1.2 million students; food and nutrition security – to pursue a national census on child nutrition; health – to assure health care of children under 7 and to protect and promote local agri-production.
- Nicaragua is not part of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement.
- The national law for food and nutrition security and sovereignty, approved in June 2009, considers the right to be nourished as a human right. This law is still current and is mentioned in the NDP 2022-2026.

Example of EU support

The action *Climate Resilience of Rural Households in the Dry Corridor* is aiming to increase the resilience to food crises and climate change-related events of households in the Dry Corridor areas of Nicaragua. With a budget of EUR 13.5 million (EU contribution EUR 13 million), the action is implemented by WFP (who contributed EUR 0.5 million) to be disbursed in the period 2020-2024.

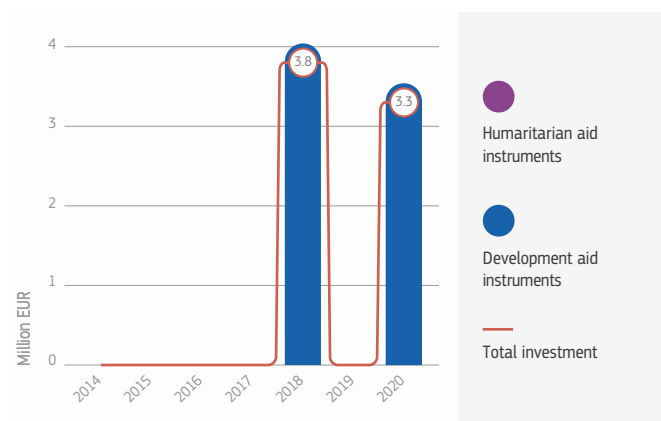
The intervention strengthens shock responsiveness mechanisms and inclusive adaptability of safety nets with a focus on climate change, food and nutrition security and women's empowerment. One of the expected results is to strengthen the regional food and nutrition security information system, identifying territories and groups at risk affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and other shocks related to climatic, economic and financial events.

Progress on the two EU pledges for nutrition



TREND, PROJECTION AND TARGETS IN THE PREVALENCE AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN (U5) STUNTED

Nicaragua has experienced a slight decline in stunting prevalence since the mid-1990s, from 17.3 % in 2012 to 14.9% in 2022, according to SOFI 2023. The number of children stunted has not really changed due to population growth (0.1 million in 2012 and 2022). The rate of decline in the number of children stunted has remained at 3% in 2022. If this trend continues, the country is unlikely to reach the national target to reduce chronic malnutrition to 11% in 2025. Recent projections are expecting nearly 81 000 children to be stunted in 2025.



EU FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO NUTRITION BETWEEN 2014 AND 2020 – TOTAL OF EUR 7 MILLION

EU food and nutrition security investments total EUR 28 million, of which EUR 7 million are specifically for nutrition. The project Boosting Rural and Urban Economy in Times of Crisis and Beyond received up to EUR 15 million (of which EUR 3.75 million for nutrition) in 2018. The Climate Resilience of Rural Households in the Dry Corridor received up to EUR 13 million (of which EUR 3.25 million for nutrition) in 2020. In both projects, the main target for nutrition were children under 18, reaching more than 300 000 children and teenagers. The nutrition and food security objective for both projects are to strengthen household consumption of healthy diets, favouring grains, vegetables and fruits. There are no specific investments committed for 2021⁸.

Planning for nutrition 2021-2027

Nicaragua is highly vulnerable to climate change due to its geographic position along the path of Atlantic hurricanes, high poverty levels and production systems heavily dependent on natural resources.

Nutrition forms part of the 360-degree approach of the EU's Global Gateway. The planned EU-funded interventions and priorities are in line with the current National Development Plan 2022-2026. They are a continuation of the priorities indicated in the previous Multi Annual Indicative Plan (MIP) 2014-2020, which remains relevant for the current period, although some targets have been reviewed upwards.

By supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth (Priority area 2) together with investments in human capital and the labour force available in the sector, the EU will contribute to reaching the SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture (2.3, 2.4).

A total of 100 000 of women of reproductive age, adolescent girls and children under 5 are expected to be reached by nutrition related interventions as part of the result 'Strengthened local food security systems, particularly in the most vulnerable areas to climate change impacts' in the objective 2 of priority 2.

The Team Europe Initiative 'Green Recovery – water management and resilient agriculture' (with Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Spain) will focus on promoting green recovery and circular economy, with cleaner production, biodiversity protection, and resource efficiency. The three building blocks for the TEI are presented as part of the MIP priorities: Climate change mitigation and adaptation, water management and resilient agriculture.

1 - United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, [World Population Prospects 2022](#), estimate for 1 January 2023

2 - <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/latin-america-and-caribbean/central-america/nicaragua/>

3 - [SOFI 2023 report](#)

4 - WFP Nicaragua, country brief. September 2022

5 - MIP Nicaragua 2021-2027

6 - MIP Nicaragua 2021-2027

7 - Recent data from State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2023 shows a stagnant situation regarding overweight (8.7%) and a slight decrease in stunting (14.9%) since 2012.

8 - Data in this section excludes some regional, global and policy/research/information commitments that could not be disaggregated by beneficiary country. The European Commission applied the methodology of the SUN Donor Network for nutrition resource tracking 2014-2020.