



NIGERIA

Nutrition situation in Nigeria

AT A GLANCE

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country (nearly 224 million¹) and its largest economy. Nevertheless, it has the highest burden of malnutrition with over 12 million stunted children (over half of the stunted children in West Africa). Malnutrition is directly associated with wealth inequalities. Children from the poorest quintile are four times more likely to suffer undernutrition, characterised by stunting, wasting and anaemia (68% of children under five²). A child in northern Nigeria (where stunting rates can exceed 60%³) is four times more likely to experience malnutrition than a child in the south. The situation is exacerbated, especially in the north-east,

by the Boko Haram insurgency, which has caused violent conflict, displacement and undermined already-fragile livelihoods affected by climate change and lack of access to enough food, water and health services. In contrast, obesity and overweight is increasing and is five times higher among women from the wealthiest households, compared to women from the poorest households⁴. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the situation, leading to increased food prices and reduced incomes, which made it even more challenging to access healthy diets.

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).

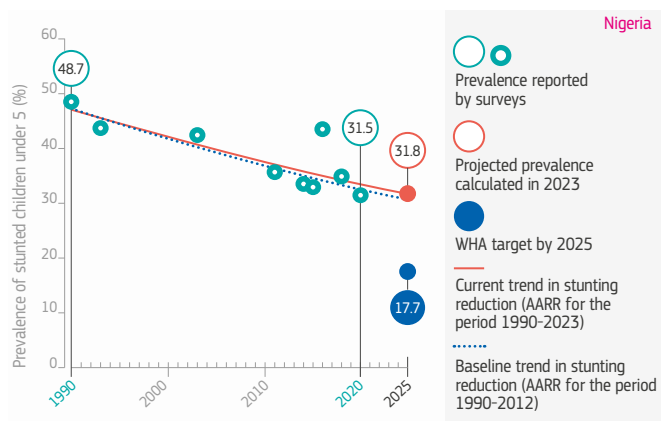
NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

- Nigeria has been a member of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement since November 2011.
- The National Policy on Food and Nutrition in Nigeria was reviewed and published in 2016.
- Nigeria's National Council on Nutrition, chaired by the Vice President, approved the National Multi-Sectoral Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition (NMPFAN) 2021-2025 with the aim to halve the proportion of people who suffer malnutrition.
- A multi-sectoral national committee on food and nutrition is chaired/facilitated by the Ministry of Finance, Budget & National Planning. The national committee is replicated at state level, but many remain non-operational.
- A nutrition partners forum brings together government ministries and development partners principally to share information on situation analyses, programme planning and coordination.
- In 1993, Nigeria established mandatory fortification of salt with iodine and in 2005 it was the first African country to achieve Universal Salt Iodisation certification.
- Since 2002, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control has guided mandatory fortification for selected food staples. It is supported by a National Fortification Alliance, established in 2007.

Example of EU support

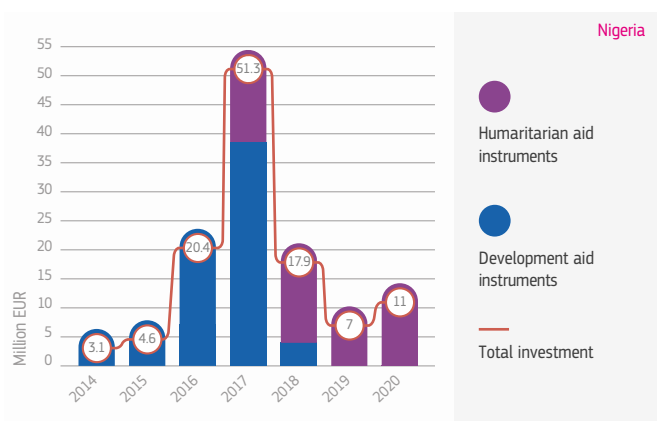
From 2013 to 2021, the EU supported (EUR 70 million) a UNICEF-managed project to improve maternal, newborn, child health and nutrition outcomes in northern Nigeria. The project built on the capacity of government to coordinate, manage and deliver improved and integrated primary health care services and provides cash transfers to enable women and children to access vital services. The project achieved significant results in improving community management to control acute malnutrition, infant and young child feeding and micronutrient deficiency. Whilst levels of stunting have only marginally improved, wasting of children under five has dropped significantly since 2013 in all three northern states (Adamwa, Kebbi and Bauchi) (far exceeding the drop in the national average). Furthermore, the programme scaled-up and strengthened capacities in the three Northern States for the optimal delivery of the Multiple Micronutrient Powder (MNP) programme for children aged 6-23 months. Quality service delivery in nutrition was strengthened across three delivery platforms – health facilities, integrated outreaches and communities.

Progress on the two EU pledges for nutrition



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

Nigeria has committed to reduce child stunting below 20% prevalence in its National Development Plan 2021-2025. Nigeria has experienced a decline, albeit inconsistent, in the prevalence of stunting since 1990, but at the same time has seen a large increase in the number of children stunted, due to population growth. The rate of decline in the number of children stunted has decelerated slightly from 1.24% in 2012 to 1.12% in 2022; if this is maintained, then nearly 12 million children are still expected to be stunted in 2025.



EU FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO NUTRITION BETWEEN 2014 AND 2020 – A TOTAL OF EUR 115.3 MILLION

The most significant nutrition investment by the EU has been its support to maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition outcomes in northern Nigeria since 2013 (described above) amounting to EUR 70 million for the first phase (2013-2017).

Nigeria was one of the first countries to adopt the humanitarian-development nexus approach, through its 'Response, Recovery and Resilience' support in Borno, and later, Yobe States, amounting to EUR 171 million, of which 25% is allocated to nutrition.

In 2021 and 2022, the EU committed EUR 43.2 million for nutrition, EUR 21.8 million was for humanitarian purposes while EUR 21.4 million was for a Co-operation Facility that, amongst other things, will support policy dialogue and the implementation of programmes and projects developed in the three priority areas of the 2021-2027 Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP)⁵.

Planning for nutrition 2021-2027

At 2021 [Tokyo Nutrition for Growth \(N4G\) Summit](#), among a number of commitments, the Government of Nigeria set out its intention to reduce stunting to 25% by 2025, as listed in the [N4G Compact Annex](#), and in preparation for the 2021 [UN Food Systems Summit](#), Nigeria developed the position paper [Nigeria National Pathways to Food Systems Transformation](#).

Nutrition forms part of the 360-degree approach of the EU's Global Gateway. The Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027 for Nigeria identifies the third priority area, Human Development, as the principal entry point for nutrition through strengthened linkages between social protection, education and reproductive health. The EU is planning a multi-sectoral, integrated approach to human development in three northern states with a special focus on young women and girls. The intervention to strengthen access to reproductive and adolescent health will support nutrition security in an integrated manner recognising that adolescent girls and breastfeeding women have the highest cost of meeting nutrient requirements indicating higher risk of deficiencies. Anaemia affects 55% of women aged 15 to 49, 86% of pregnant women, and 62% of children aged 6 to 59 months.

Furthermore, the MIP's first priority area, Green and Digital Economy, which supports climate-smart agricultural production and nature-based solutions, selected value chains (including plant, livestock and aquaculture), renewable energy and job creation and is aligned to the Farm to Fork Strategy, offers opportunities to address food and nutrition security whilst reducing environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity.

In line with the EU's Green Deal, the 'Nigerian Green Economy Alliance' Team Europe Initiative (with France, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands and Sweden) will support the Nigerian Government's efforts to diversify the economy through enhancing access to renewable energy, integrating circular economy principles in the economic development model and boosting development of the agriculture sector. A recent national policy dialogue on tackling the climate-food-nutrition crisis highlighted the urgent need for a holistic and inclusive approach to address the impact of climate change on nutrition outcomes in Nigeria.

1 - UNDESA [World Population Prospects 2022](#), population estimate of July 2023.

2 - Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018.

3 - Stunting prevalence in Jigawa, 64%, and Kebbi, 66% (NDHS 2018).

4 - Nigeria Demographic & Health Survey 2018. Nigeria has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.677 and is ranked at 165 of 166 countries (2022).

5 - The 2014-2020 data are tracked according to the SUN Donor Network method, while the 2021 commitments onwards are tracked with the Nutrition Policy Marker method. The data are therefore not directly comparable. Data for 2022 are preliminary.