

## UZBEKISTAN

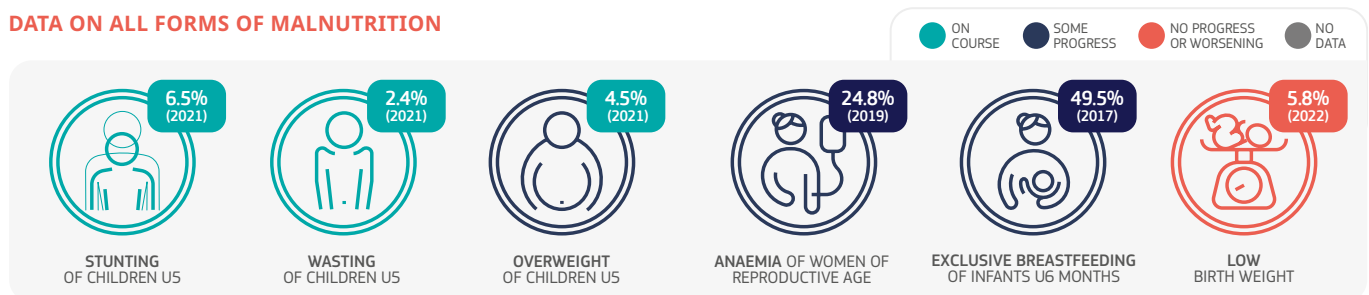
### Nutrition situation in Uzbekistan

#### AT A GLANCE

Uzbekistan has an estimated population of 35.4 million<sup>1</sup> and a poverty rate of 14% in 2022<sup>2</sup>. However, sub-national disparities are increasing, and the urban-rural poverty gap remains wide<sup>3</sup>. Uzbekistan's Development Strategy 2022-2026 aims to halve poverty by 2026 and for the country to achieve upper-middle-income status by 2030. The last twenty years has seen an impressive reduction in the prevalence of stunted children from 25% in 2002 to 6.5% in 2021. However, nutrition insecurity in rural areas is a challenge, stemming from a lack of dietary and nutritional knowledge and inadequate hygiene and sanitation, with the result that the population is affected by micronutrient

deficiencies as well as high rates of overweight and obesity. Almost 33% of the population are classified as overweight<sup>4</sup>. Obesity disproportionately affects women (22%) as compared to men (16%) and at least one in eight women is living with diabetes. While recent years have seen progress in reducing anaemia in women of reproductive age (25% in 2019 compared to 46% in 2002), Uzbekistan has been identified as having the highest diet-related disease risk in the world. A significant proportion of the population is unable to afford a healthy diet. Uzbekistan has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.242 and is ranked 61 of 166 countries in the 2022 index.

#### 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

- In 2019, the 'Uzstandard' agency introduced new first grade flour fortification standards for fortification of wheat flour with iron, folic acid and zinc.
- In 2024, the Government adopted the National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy to 2030, with the aim of ensuring food security and healthy nutrition and introducing effective economic and environmental management systems for the use of natural, financial and material resources in support of healthy and active livelihoods. The Strategy will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG2.
- The Strategy was prepared with the support of the Inter-governmental Food Security and Nutrition and Food Safety Technical Working Group. The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for its implementation.
- A National Information Platform will be developed in 2025 for risk monitoring and early warning. A new information system will be launched to provide regular data on food products and prices.
- The current system for measurement of food and nutrition sufficiency does not provide sufficient information on nutrition consumption, dietary diversity or food waste, leading to gaps in informed decision-making and policy planning. Affordability, food safety, quality, and overall sustainability are not yet fully integrated into the decision-making processes. There is limited coordination between ministries on food security and nutrition.

#### Example of EU support

The EU Agricultural Support and Knowledge Development (ASK) Facility, the EU funded technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture, has organised meetings of the Inter-governmental Food Security and Nutrition and Food Safety Technical Working Group to advance the preparation of the National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy and a new draft Law on Food Safety. The ASK Facility provided advice and draft proposals.

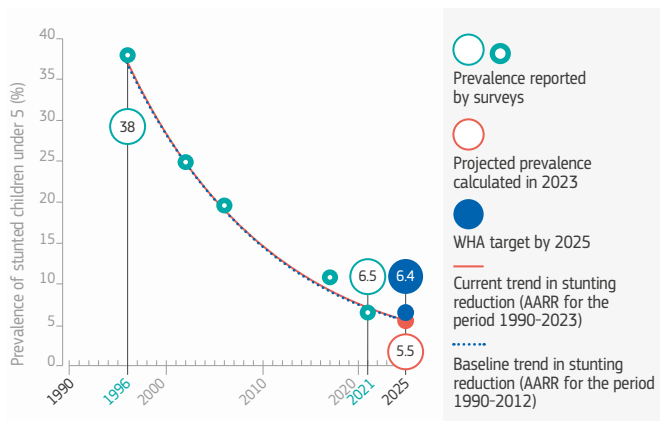
The assistance has also included the organisation of workshops for officials to enhance their knowledge on food and nutrition security concepts, international standards and definitions, and analysis of various issues related to food safety.

The ASK Facility has provided recommendations to the Ministry of Agriculture, such as the establishment of a dedicated Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) Unit and the Strategy Implementation organisational mechanism under the Ministry's Food Industry Department.

Additionally, the EU-funded Nutrition Research Facility experts are supporting the ministries of health and agriculture on the development and implementation of a pilot food and nutrition survey scheduled for October 2024. The pilot will include capacity development of survey staff and support to determine the collection of data on a suitable number of households and individuals.



## Progress on the two EU pledges for nutrition



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

The estimated annual average rate of reduction in stunting in 2022 is 6.4%, representing a continued high rate of reduction since 2012. If this trend is maintained, approximately 210 000 children are expected to be stunted in 2025, surpassing the WHA target of 244 000 children.

## EU FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO NUTRITION BETWEEN 2014 AND 2020 – A TOTAL OF EUR 0 MILLION

The EU made no financial commitments to nutrition in Uzbekistan between 2014 and 2020. A commitment in 2022 comprised two tranches of EUR 13.5 million as Budget Support for the development of Uzbekistan's agri-food sector and resilient rural livelihoods. Nutrition comprises a Significant Objective within this, as defined by the OECD DAC Nutrition Policy Marker.

In October 2023, the EUD countersigned the Financing Agreement with the Government of Uzbekistan on budget support for the development of the agri-food sector and resilient rural livelihoods. The total budget support amounts to EUR 20 million, which will be disbursed through one fixed tranche of 6 m and two variable tranches (each EUR 7 million). It is expected that in total EUR 13 million will be disbursed in 2024<sup>5</sup>.

## Planning for nutrition 2021-2027

During the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, the Government of Uzbekistan presented its Pathway to Transforming to Efficient and Sustainable Food Systems by 2030, via the Strategy for the development of the agri-food sector. The main objective of this strategy is: to radically improve public policy directed to ongoing reforms, aimed at improving the competitiveness of the agri-food sector. It includes:

- ensuring the food security of the population;
- creating a favourable agri-business environment and added value chains;
- ensuring rational use of natural resources and environmental protection.

Nutrition forms part of the 360-degree approach of the EU's Global Gateway. The EU's Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Uzbekistan 2021-2027 includes an objective to support a healthy food system. Under focal area 1 - Agri-food policy framework and advisory services, efforts are envisaged to tighten food safety and sustainability requirements in order to raise food standards and integrate smallholder farmers and other stakeholders into competitive food value chains. Under focal area 2 - Sustainable, smart and resilient rural livelihoods, emphasis is on building capacity amongst smallholder farmers, cooperatives of producers and processors, to advocate for family farming, strengthen competitiveness and market inclusion, emphasising women's empowerment. Activities include: establishment of a policy and regulatory framework for food security and nutrition and development of related key institutional capacities; development of national dietary guidelines as a basis for food security and nutrition policies to promote good nutrition and prevent non-communicable diseases; revision of the law on food quality and safety to ensure full conformity with the WTO Agreements on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade; and a national programme to promote a culture of healthy food consumption, awareness of nutrition and the health benefits of regional food products.

The Team Europe Initiative on sustainable agri-food sector and resilient livelihoods enables synergies across all MIP priority areas and among European partners contributing to the sector, such as France, Germany and the European Investment Bank. Team Europe focuses on supporting climate resilient agri-food and rural development, sustainable value chains, green and inclusive recovery of the Aral Sea region, and private sector development.

A priority is to ensure that gender transformative objectives are meaningfully operationalised within the framework of the agri-food sector. The action will increase understanding of gender issues related to women's access to land; expand women's participation in water user, farm organisations and agricultural fora; promote healthy food eating habits for women and children; support women, youth and other vulnerable groups in rural areas to develop entrepreneurial skills through a business incubation programme; and support their access to finance.

1 - UNDESA [World Population Prospects 2022](#); population estimate of January 2024.  
 2 - <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/d5f32ef28464d01f195827b7e020a3e8-0500022021/related/mpo-uzb.pdf>  
 3 - UNDP June 2022 <https://www.undp.org/uzbekistan/news/visiting-uzbekistan-s-recent-progress-what-can-be-improved-lessons-learned>

4 - UN WHO health survey 'The prevalence of risk factors for non-communicable diseases in the Republic of Uzbekistan (2019)'  
 5 - Data in this section excludes some regional, global and policy/research/information commitments that could not be disaggregated by beneficiary country. Data for 2022 are preliminary. The European Commission applied the methodology of the SUN Donor Network for nutrition resource tracking 2014-2020 and the OECD DAC's nutrition policy marker from 2021 onwards.