New strategic priorities highlight increased focus on the fight against hunger and malnutrition

In 2018, the French Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) included the fight against hunger and malnutrition as one of the sectors France seeks to strengthen in the coming years.

According to France’s main strategy for nutrition, the ‘International Nutrition Roadmap 2016-2020’, France focuses on two objectives. First, the prevention and treatment of malnutrition in women of child-bearing age and in children under two, and second, improving the efficiency of international mobilization in the fight against malnutrition. France’s nutrition official development assistance (ODA) focuses on eight priority countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Laos, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Central African Republic, and Chad. The importance of nutrition as a determining health factor is growing in France’s development policy, particularly when it comes to maternal, newborn, and child health. In line with its overall geographic priorities, nutrition-related activities focus on sub-Saharan Africa.

Quantifying France’s nutrition-related activities is difficult because of its cross-sectoral engagement. According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data, France spent only US$5 million on basic nutrition (also known as nutrition-specific interventions) in 2017. However, overall funding to nutrition is higher, as France also funds nutrition-sensitive interventions. According to the 2018 Global Nutrition Report, France’s nutrition-sensitive interventions amounted to US$16 million in 2016, (the latest year for which data is available). France is also a member of the Scaling-Up Nutrition movement (SUN), an initiative encouraging countries to mobilize and scale up resources for nutrition globally.

Further information: ‘nutrition-sensitive’ and ‘nutrition-specific’ interventions

‘Nutrition-sensitive interventions’ are those that address underlying causes of malnutrition and take into account cross-sector actions and impacts (i.e., improving access to diverse foods). ‘Nutrition-specific interventions’ address the immediate causes of undernutrition and have the improvement of nutrition (i.e., support for exclusive breastfeeding, supplementary feeding, etc.) as their primary objective.

GISA supports the MAE in defining strategic priorities for nutrition

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAE) oversees France’s policies on nutrition. The most relevant department is the Sub-directorate for Human Development (HUMA) within the Directorate-General for Globalization, Culture, Education, and International Development (DGM). Within French development policy, nutrition is, to a large extent, incorporated into the concept of food security. The Interministerial Group on Food Security (GISA), jointly led by the Ministries of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs, gathers the ministries of Finance, Environment, Education and Research, the French Development Agency (AFD), research institutes, NGOs, French farmers, and foundations.