

SUN Business Network: Partnerships with Business to Address Undernutrition in Tanzania

A report from the SUN Business Network into the existing efforts and opportunities for engaging the private sector in the delivery of Tanzania's National Nutrition Strategy

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Background

The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement is the principle policy and programmatic movement for nutrition. It focuses on empowering national governments to develop and, in coordination with other key stakeholders, deliver against national nutrition strategies.

The SUN Business Network (SBN) is one of the SUN Movement's four global networks (Business, Donor, Civil Society and UN). The SBN aims to support Tanzania (and other SUN countries) to engage with business within a multi-stakeholder, country-owned, approach to scaling up nutrition.

On the invitation of the Government of Tanzania (GoT), through the Office of the Prime Minister and the Tanzanian Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC), SBN has produced a report on the existing efforts to engage the private sector in improving nutrition and new opportunities to increase involvement of business in supporting the implementation of Tanzania's NNS. A multi-stakeholder convening will be held on January 15th to further explore the report and potential next steps for creating greater alignment between private sector investment and the goals laid out in Tanzania's NNS. The convening will aim to:

- share concrete examples, lessons learnt and success stories of business contributions to SUN to expand the evidence base;
- provide easy access to existing nutrition-related knowledge (policy, technical, programmatic) and best practices;
- provide a platform for companies and other stakeholders to engage with each other and to begin to pursue specific issues of common interest;
- establish next steps for the network in Tanzania.

The report which this document summarizes was drafted on the basis of more than 30 stakeholder interviews and after careful review of the Tanzania NNS, the Tanzania NNS Implementation Plan (NNS-IP), the Tanzania Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (TAFSIP) and other key documents. The full report is available upon request.

Executive Summary

Under nutrition remains a huge challenge in Tanzania; the prevalence of stunting of children under 5 remains high at 42 per cent. It is also estimated that undernutrition is a significant cost to the Tanzanian economy, resulting in losses of 2.65% each year.

However, in recent years nutrition has become a public policy priority in Tanzania. The first National Nutrition Strategy (NNS) and NNS Implementation Plan (NNS-IP) have been established and alignment with other major national strategies such as the Tanzania Agriculture and Food Investment Programme (TAFSIP) is beginning.

Tanzania has successfully engaged business in scaling up nutrition in several staple foods. Salt iodization has been particularly successful, now reaching an **estimated 82% of households**. The formation of a National Food Fortification Alliance is central to additional fortification efforts.

Although a number of large food processors are participating in food fortification, relatively few companies realize the important role they can play in scaling up nutrition. Some successful partnerships between government, aid agencies and business exist, but most lack scale and have not been systematically integrated into ongoing and planned development activities.

Much progress has been made in the agriculture sector in creating a supportive enabling environment for closer cooperation between business and other actors through TAFSIP and the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT). However increased agricultural production has not led to improved nutritional status of the population. These partnerships offer great potential to be leveraged for nutrition and indications are that most actors are supportive of finding ways to integrate nutrition into current and future programs.

There is much to build on in Tanzania, but no clear plan exists for maximizing the contributions from business and there is limited infrastructure in place to drive coordinated agendas. This report attempts to provide a path to impact by outlining 6 initial recommendations for engaging business in Tanzania's ambitions to reduce nutrition:

1. Strengthen the role and responsibility of the private sector in the NNS and NNS-IP – establishing clear roles and responsibilities between different actors
2. Increase awareness of nutrition within the business community
3. Explore how best to integrate nutrition into agricultural investments /commitments in the SAGCOT corridor
4. Identify priority nutrition-specific interventions relevant to the private sector and convene multi-stakeholder consultations to chart a way forward, including with SMEs
5. Explore models of behavior change communication to determine impact and cost effectiveness and integrate business perspectives and resources to launch consumer research and unbranded social marketing campaigns
6. Strengthen district level capacity for coordination and delivery

These recommendations are laid out in detail below and will be open to further consultation.

Key Recommendations to help chart a way forward for business and nutrition in Tanzania

- 1. Strengthen the role and responsibility of the private sector in the National Nutrition Strategy (NNS) and National Nutrition Strategy - Implementation Plan (NNS-IP) – establishing clear roles and responsibilities between the different actors**

NNS

The NNS highlights the need to form partnerships with business, but the only roles it foresees for private sector are in the provision of social services and in support of government and community actions. There is no reference of the role of markets, nor of the role of private sector in supporting infrastructure, skills and capacity development, delivery or demand creation. The challenge and risk of the private sector not engaging in scaling up nutrition is not mentioned in the National Nutrition Strategy. Finally, there is no explanation on how the government wants to enhance public-private partnerships.

Because the roles highlighted for business in the NNS are oriented toward support of public deliver programs, these types of engagement typically fall within the corporate social responsibility segments of the businesses. While important, these types of engagement can only provide limited scale and are almost never sustainable. The immediate challenge is therefore to identify interventions which resonate with core business and align with the NNS.

It is important to note that other documents such as the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty from 2005, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme from 2003, and the African Regional Nutrition Strategy 2005-2015 all seem to have a bigger focus on the role that the private sector plays regarding nutrition. The importance of partnering and involving the private sector is highlighted several times throughout these documents.

NNS-IP

The NNS-IP describes eight strategies for delivering the NNS. The private sector is referenced, but only in the context of resource mobilization for public services and in the context of “partnership” which is not well defined. The strategies on resource mobilization and partnership both clearly reference business but do not offer specifics on where business investment and partnership are required. The other six strategies do not reference business, but offer the potential to engage private sector:

- 1) **Accessing Quality Nutrition Services:** This strategy focuses on public facility, community interventions, agricultural systems and social safety nets. It does not reference potential market based delivery of nutrition services, nor does it identify whether and it what ways private sector can be engaged as a service provider for public delivery. Nevertheless, the clear GoT commitment to food fortification programs suggests that market based delivery of nutrition interventions is a valued approach.

- 2) Behaviour Change Communication: behavior change communication is another clear area where private sector has a vested interest, and has potential skills and resources to bring to bear. Opportunities may exist to align unbranded social marketing with ongoing or planned commercial marketing efforts, for example.
- 3) Legislation for a Supportive Environment for Optimal Nutrition: Though the title “legislation for a supportive environment for optimal nutrition” would suggest little to no private sector involvement, the underlying actions for enforcing such legislation and regulation may benefit from some specific and transparent business participation by sharing food safety and quality standards and protocols and by providing training:
 - Train food inspectors and industries according to QC and QA guidelines/ manuals
 - Undertake quality inspections of manufacturers and submit samples to laboratory for quantitative testing
 - Ensure conformity of fortificants and food fortification standards
- 4) Mainstreaming Nutrition Interventions into National and Sectorial Policies, Plans and Programs: there is an opportunity to take the lessons from this report and apply them to the development of the NNS 2016+ strategy
- 5) Technical Capacity for Nutrition: institutional and technical capacity for nutrition, the private sector might be strategically engaged to share knowledge, technology, skills and processes.
- 6) Research, Monitoring and Evaluation: there may be opportunities to engage private sector in data collection and analysis, for example surveying population nutritional status, consumption behavior, and nutrition awareness.

2. Increase awareness of nutrition within the business community

Except for some large food processing companies involved in food fortification and a handful of more specialized food companies, the private sector in Tanzania seems not to be aware of the important role they could play in the fight against malnutrition. The huge challenge to educate the private sector should be but is not mentioned in the National Nutrition Strategy.

Nutrition and business interests are overlapping more and more. The private sector must begin to include nutrition considerations into their corporate strategies, not only because of opportunities to diversify product portfolios in a growing sector but also because the health and well-being of workforces and populations can have a direct impact on business productivity and sustainability. However, this is not immediately evident to most companies and therefore education and outreach is needed.

In terms of product portfolios, only a limited number of companies can engage in products such as fortified staples and therapeutic foods. A broader view on how business can contribute outside of traditional food categories is needed to engage companies effectively and to leverage the expertise and resources of the private sector. In addition, interviews revealed that

many companies have not grasped the opportunities of developing specific products to address the nutritional needs of various segments of the population.

3. Explore how best to integrate nutrition into agricultural investments/commitments in the SAGCOT corridor

SAGCOT and the TAFSIP which guides its investment strategy, has done a good job of engaging a diverse range of businesses and other stakeholders to drive its agricultural productivity agenda. They offer significant infrastructure which can be leveraged strategically to deliver nutrition impacts without detracting from its primary objectives of productivity and economic growth. To identify and drive investment in these potential quick win areas, this program could:

- Review existing Letters of Intent (LOI's) to determine potential entry points for nutrition
- Conduct landscape assessment of farmer food security interventions in SAGCOT regions to:
 - o Identify existing activities which may already impact farmer nutrition
 - o Make recommendations on easy-to-implement interventions which can be used to leverage existing investments for nutrition which are no currently nutrition-sensitive
 - o Conduct high level cost analysis of potential program implementation
- Support training of community health extension workers and explore alignment with agricultural distribution system in SAGCOT

4. Identify priority nutrition-specific interventions relevant to the private sector and convene multi-stakeholder consultations to chart a way forward, including participation of SME's

There are several ongoing successful nutrition-specific programs which could be scaled with increased engagement and investment from private sector. It is important to focus attention on those interventions which have the strongest evidence behind them, the clearest government and donor commitment to support, and offer the most potential for commercialization. These will need to be identified through consultation; potential opportunities include:

- Deepen investment into large scale food fortification and support TFNC in coordination of National Food Fortification Alliance
- Provide targeted technical assistance to small and medium scale millers
- Expand on market based delivery of multi-nutrient powders to support early childhood nutrition

Once identified, it will be important to build multi-stakeholder planning teams that can chart a way forward and seek commitments and investment to drive meaningful action.

5. Explore models of behavior change communication to better determine impact and cost effectiveness and integrate business perspectives/resources to launch consumer research and unbranded social marketing campaigns

Research into public sector nutrition education has shown that behavior change interventions can have some measurable impact on consumption and nutritional status in a setting with limited reach, but evidence is lacking on how to change nutrition behavior at scale, in a cost-effective, sustainable manner. Most, if not all, nutrition action plans of the over 40 SUN countries include important efforts to scale up such behavior change interventions. Costed plans have identified gaps in funding such nation-wide campaigns.

At the same time, many manufacturers also face the challenge of educating consumers about nutritional needs and benefits of fortification and other strategies to increase micronutrient intake, aiming to motivate consumers to procure and consume fortified, nutritious products. Investments in unbranded nutrition behavior change interventions are made on top of their branded product marketing efforts. They are able to apply their extensive marketing and consumer insights expertise to these campaigns, yet do not collaborate or align their campaigns with public health authorities.

Opportunities exist to align messaging and investment, as well as to leverage innovative new approaches such as mobile communications to build demand for nutrition.

6. Strengthen district level capacity for coordination and delivery

While substantial efforts have been made to support coordination across public and private sector stakeholders at the national level, translating that coordination into impact at the district and sub-district level has been challenging. Because partnerships with the private sector require substantial coordination, partnership brokering and program management, it is important to build capacity at all levels to identify and manage impactful partnerships.

Conclusion

There is tremendous potential to engage business in Tanzania in the fight against undernutrition. There is clear political will from the Government and interest from the private sector. Partnerships exist which can be leveraged and scaled. The challenge is to select priority interventions which are meaningful and focused, and which are relevant for business. If properly focused, this consultation and those that follow can chart a way forward, catalyze investment and broker partnerships to impact the nutritional status of the people of Tanzania.

ANNEX

Overview of NNS

Tanzania joined the SUN movement in June 2011 and has since established:

- a multi-stakeholder and high-level Steering Committee for Nutrition, convened by the Prime Minister's office and the Tanzania Food & Nutrition Centre
- A National Nutrition Strategy (NNS) was finalized and launched in Sept 2012, while its implementation plan was endorsed in May 2013.
- Moreover, in 2012 a government directive was made to include in 2012/13 a budget line for district level planning. From August 2013 Nutrition Officers with nutrition qualifications were appointed in 145 districts and guidelines for Nutrition Planning and Budgeting were disseminated to Districts for the 2012/13 planning cycle and a Public Expenditure Review was planned for completion in December 2013.
- In May 2013 the national standards for the fortification of oil, wheat and maize flour were announced.

The NNS focuses on eight priority areas:

- (i) Infant and young child feeding
- (ii) Vitamin and mineral deficiencies
- (iii) Maternal and child malnutrition
- (iv) Nutrition and HIV and AIDS
- (v) Children, women and households in difficult circumstances
- (vi) Diet-related non-communicable diseases
- (vii) Household food security
- (viii) Nutrition surveillance, surveys and information management

Overview of TAFSIP

The Tanzania Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (TAFSIP) is an initiative from 2010 which brings all stakeholders in the agricultural sector to a common agenda of comprehensively transforming the sector to create wealth, reduce poverty and achieve food and nutrition security.

The TAFSIP is a product of years of consultative processes between the government, the private sector, development partners, farmers, civil society organisations and non-state actors, the African Union Commission, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Planning and Coordinating Agency, the East African Community, Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme's (CAADP) pillar institutions, Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and other regional and international bodies on how to promote agricultural growth and food and nutrition security in Tanzania under the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

The objective is to rationalize the allocation of resources to achieve an annual 6 percent agricultural GDP growth, consistent with the national objectives to reduce rural poverty and improve household food and nutrition security. TAFSIP is not a new agricultural development strategy or programme but a framework for the prioritisation, and planning of investments that will drive Tanzania's agricultural development over the next decade. The TAFSIP is a 10 year road map for agricultural and rural development that identifies priority areas for investment and estimates the financing needs to be provided by government, the private sector and its development partners.

Overview of SAGCOT

The Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) has been established as a public private partnership with three overarching objectives:

1. It aims to enhance Tanzania's food security and accelerate agricultural transformation
2. Safeguarding that this happens in a sustainable and responsible manner
3. Whilst ensuring improved livelihoods for smallholder farmers and their communities.

The mandate of the partnership is to achieve this by catalyzing responsible private sector led agriculture developments. SAGCOT envisions that USD 2.1 billion of private investment can be mobilized over a twenty-year period, alongside public sector grants and loans of USD 1.3 billion. The impact will be a tripling of the area's agricultural output and income improvement for millions of Tanzanians.

Partners within "The Partnership" represent Farmers, Governments (Central and Local), the Tanzanian and Global Business, Development Partners, Foundations and NGO's.

To fulfill its mission as a partnership broker, the Centre will organize its activities around four workstreams:

- Workstream 1: Cluster and Partnership Development
- Workstream 2: Enabling Environment and Policy Analysis
- Workstream 3: Information and Communication
- Workstream 4: Effective monitoring and evaluation

Documenting the role of nutrition in the TAFSIP and SAGCOT plans

Nutrition is mentioned 158 times throughout the Tanzania Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan. The focus is on nutritional security with two whole chapters (3.4 and 4.6).

The document acknowledges that:

- Despite solid economic growth Tanzania has not been able to achieve significant reductions in poverty or shown significant improvements in nutritional status
- Nutritional indicators also showed little improvement
- Under-nutrition and malnutrition remain serious and widespread problems
- While the country has strived to achieve self-sufficiency in key food crops such as maize, beans, rice and cassava, through increased production, less attention has been paid to the nutritional requirements in terms of vitamins, minerals and other micro nutrients

TAFSIP takes the approach that nutritional improvements are best achieved by improving production of key calorie-laden food crops, especially maize. The analysis therefore identifies this sub-sector as a priority sector for achieving growth, poverty, and nutrition objectives. However the analysis does not consider how these calorie-dense but often times nutrient-poor commodities can lead to nutrition improvements. TAFSIP does recognize that increasing food production alone does not necessarily translate into improved nutrition outcomes. Families must also be provided with information and education about good nutrition and sanitation practices. Implicit is that nutritious food must be available, whether in the market or produced on-farm.

Though nutrition is largely absent from the SAGCOT plan, one of the activities of SAGCOT is to facilitate individual partnerships and the workplan states that: “Yet, to benefit from the facilitation support of the Centre, partnerships will have to prove an emphasis on their ability to impact smallholder farmers and generate green growth, including due attention to gender and nutrition aspects”.

Learning the lessons from TAFSIP on how to engage business

The role of the private sector is described as central and as the engine for economic growth throughout the TAFSIP. It highlights the need to create a favorable climate for the private sector activities and the need for clarification of roles for each stakeholder. It emphasizes where companies should focus their efforts and describes that the lack of participation is one of the reasons for slow progress.

To support the implementation of private sector engagement, TAFSIP created incentives for business participation, including the SAGCOT catalytic fund, private sector oriented discussions on regulation and policy, and financial support for farmers