

BACKGROUND

Multi Sector Nutrition Plan (MSNP) 2013-2017

- Led by NPC, the MSNP was developed in 2012 based on global commitments and national policies and legal frameworks including NAGA recommendations (1), following a series of consultative meetings with line ministries; sector reference and working groups; and development partners including donors, academia and CSOs (2).

Study Rationale

- Given the mandate needed to achieve MSNP targets, it is important to learn how nutrition interventions are prioritized and what successes and challenges are faced during the MSNP roll out.

Pathways to Better Nutrition (PBN) Case Study

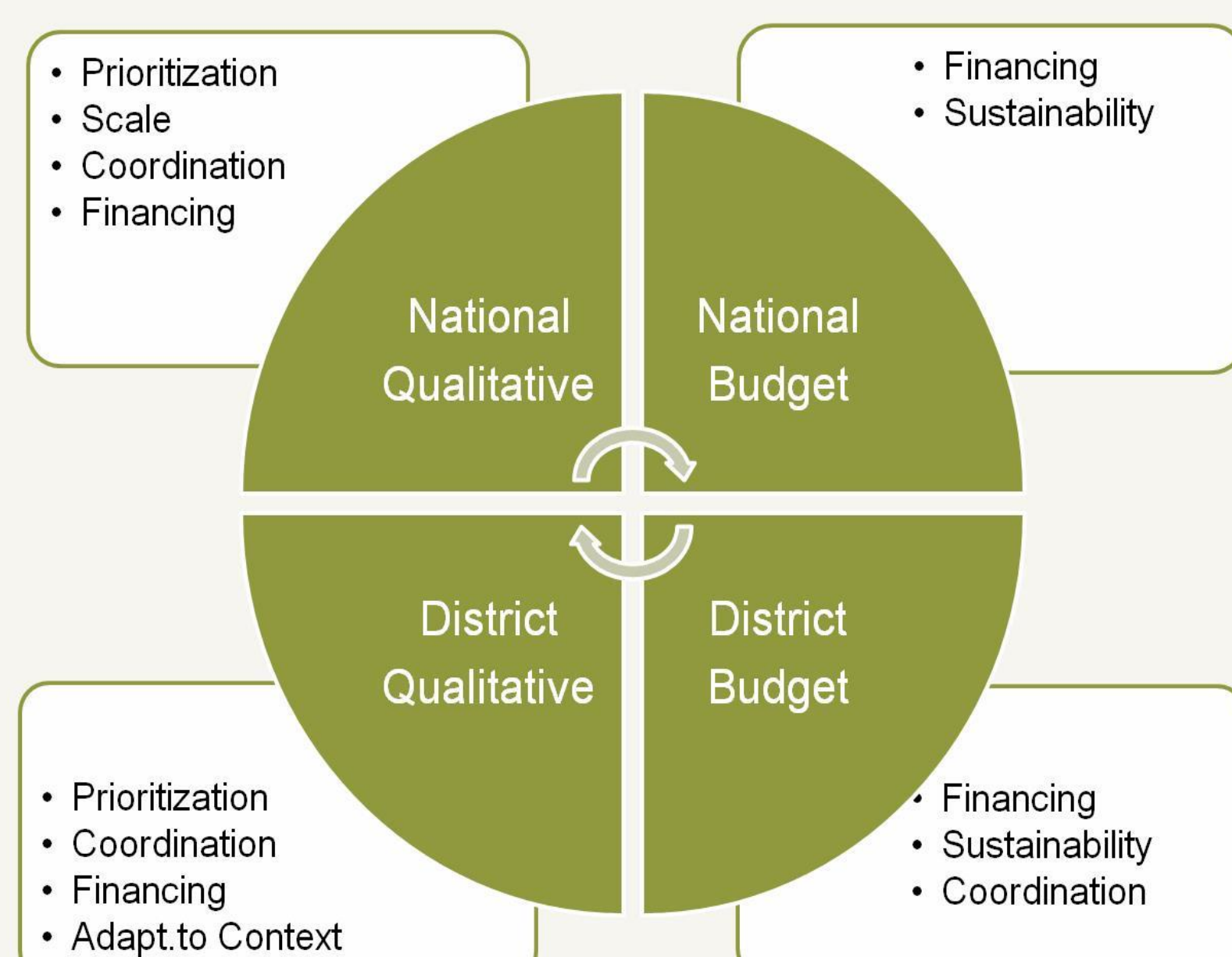
- The USAID funded SPRING Project began the PBN mixed method prospective case study in 2014 in Nepal to learn successes, recommend and guide decision-making in national and global level. Nepal was selected based on: scaling up rapidly; strength of nutrition governance; and reductions in reducing under-nutrition

OBJECTIVES

Overall objective

To explore how the Government of Nepal prioritizes nutrition interventions in support the implementation of Multi Sector Nutrition Plan to reach its chosen goals of reducing under nutrition.

Components of the Study



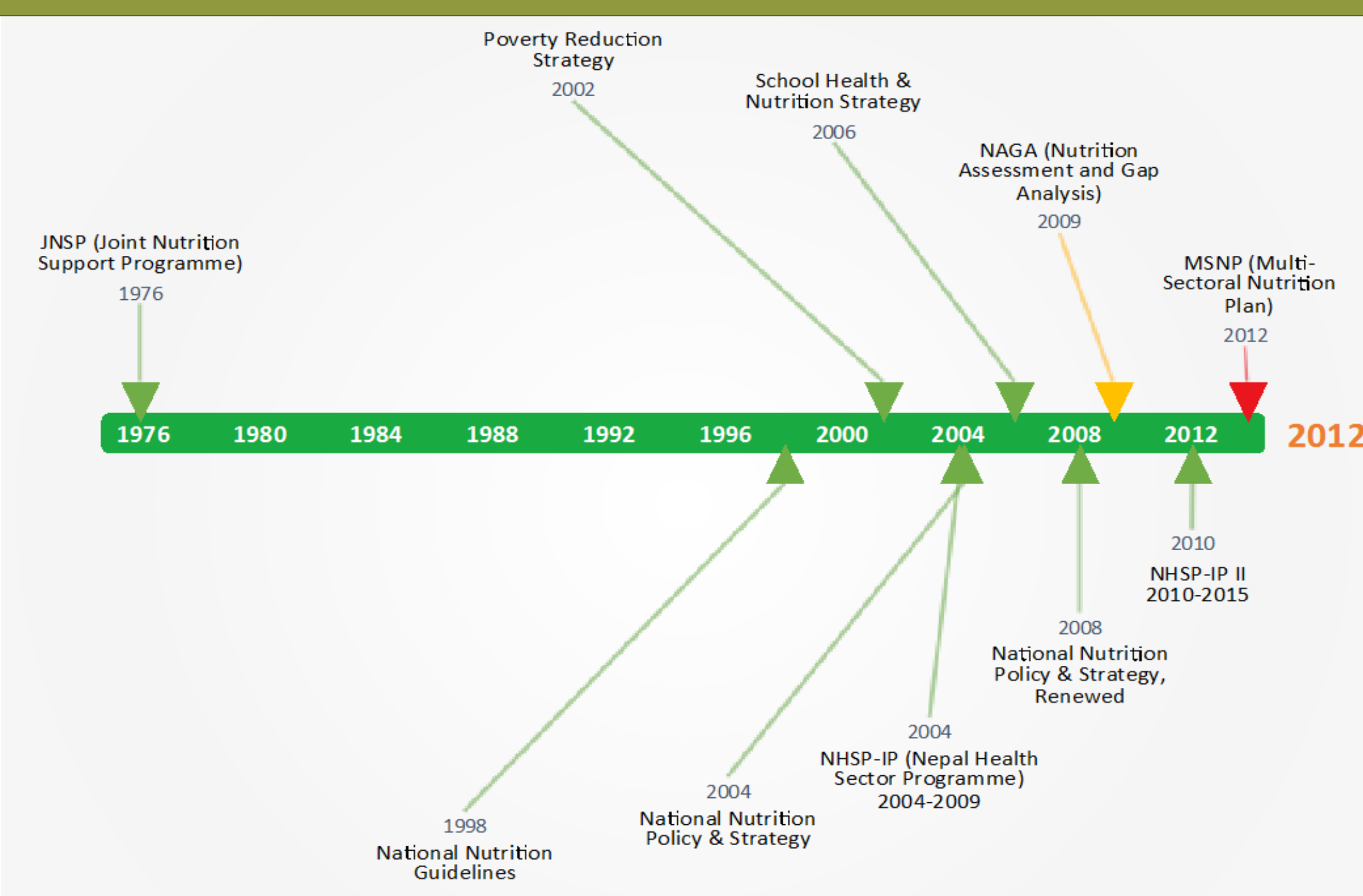
METHODS

Study design	Two-year (2014-2016), mixed method (qualitative, quantitative and budget) and prospective case study
Study setting	Nepal: National level, district (3 MSNP pilot districts) and VDC
Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative interviews with key informants from the six stakeholder groups as defined by Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN): government, donors, UN groups, civil society organizations, private sector, and academia/research institutes. Baseline central-level interviews conducted in June 2014; district-level interviews to be conducted January 2015; follow-on interviews conducted on a periodic basis Tracking of documents, meetings, and newspaper articles related to MSNP Budget and financial assistance documents from government and non-government entities Desk review of nutrition trends in Nepal, history of nutrition efforts, and content of MSNP Secondary quantitative data on indicators and outcomes related to MSNP: DHS, NLSS, HMIS
Management and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative data (2 years, 2014-2016): NVivo 10 using thematic analysis Budget data (3 fiscal years): Stata 12 by extracting data using SUN guidance Quantitative data (most recent available, 2011): Stata 12, Excel
Ethical considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical approval obtained from Nepal Health Research Council Written consent obtained from key informants

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

Data collected and analyzed thus far indicate:

- Nepal has a history of national nutrition efforts (see figure at right), the latest one being MSNP (1).
- The MSNP calls for several governance structures for nutrition, and to a large extent these have been created and are functional (1).
- The MSNP calls for specific activities to be carried out that span a number of sectors and stakeholder types (1).
- Malnutrition cuts across ecological zones and development regions; however, the needs, and relative weaknesses and strengths related to nutrition vary substantially (see figure below) (3).



Key Indicators	Completion of primary education (†)	Low birthweight (<2.5kg) (†)	Stunting, children under 5 yrs. (†)	Underweight, children under 5 yrs. (†)	Underweight, non-pregnant women (†)	Wasting, children under 5 yrs. (†)
National Average	46%	18%	41%	29%	18%	11%
Eastern Mountain	51%	22%	45%	24%	10%	15%
Central Mountain	33%	23%	46%	35%	15%	8%
Western Mountain	53%	22%	60%	42%	22%	10%
Eastern Hill	42%	22%	46%	29%	12%	11%
Central Hill	40%	18%	31%	23%	12%	10%
Western Hill	44%	16%	36%	17%	8%	8%
Mid-western Hill	36%	25%	52%	37%	19%	14%
Far-western Hill	41%	24%	58%	40%	23%	8%
Eastern Terai	50%	18%	31%	24%	19%	8%
Central Terai	47%	10%	41%	32%	26%	14%
Western Terai	49%	15%	40%	34%	21%	8%
Mid-western Terai	57%	24%	44%	32%	20%	13%
Far-western Terai	60%	25%	32%	25%	24%	15%

Some emerging themes from the national level baseline interviews:

- Inconsistent understanding of the MSNP:** Despite the involvement of all key informants with MSNP implementation, confusion exists as to: whether the MSNP is a project or a framework; how the MSNP should affect existing and forthcoming nutrition-related projects; and the use of MSNP for selecting and prioritizing activities.
- Effective harnessing of funds for MSNP:** Key informants from both government and non-government groups stressed the importance of government ownership of the MSNP. Many noted that the unprecedented international momentum for nutrition presented both challenges and opportunities.

NEXT STEPS

Data Collection

- Follow-on data is continuing to be collected for all 6 stakeholder groups until January 2016.
- District-level and VDC-level baseline interviews will be conducted in January 2015.
- Findings from the central budget analysis for budget year 2013/14 will be validated in early 2015. The report will be released after validation is complete. Analysis will be repeated for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Dissemination

- Key findings from baseline qualitative data will be shared with MSNP central-level stakeholders in early 2015 as well through the NNFSS.
- SPRING will work with the NPC to produce interim technical briefs on a few key themes that emerge to support process learning for the MSNP rollout.
- Budget reports will be released on a yearly basis.
- Final results integrating baseline, follow-on, and endline data analysis will be released in 2016.

REFERENCES

- Government of Nepal: National Planning Commission. Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan: For Accelerating the Reduction of Maternal and Child Under-Nutrition in Nepal, 2013-2017: Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission; 2012.
- Houston R, Madhukar B. Shrestha, Amanda Pomeroy, Jolene Wun, Indu Sharma. Pathways to Better Nutrition Case Study: Nepal Strategic Background Report. Arlington, VA: USAID/Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) Project., 2014.
- Pomeroy, Amanda, Jolene Wun. Snapshots of Nutrition in Nepal: 2014 Compendium. Arlington, VA. USAID/Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) Project; 2014.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SPRING expresses deep gratitude to National Planning Commission; USAID Mission; all key informants; Dr. Madhu Dixit Devkota; and all those who provided information to this study.