



Irish Aid
An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

I-CAN POLICY BRIEF: BRIDGING CLIMATE AND NUTRITION POLICIES IN TANZANIA

Amelia Giancarlo, Tumaini Charles, Silvia Silvestri, Antony Ogolla, Oliver Camp

SUMMARY

This policy brief highlights the challenges and opportunities arising from the need to better integrate climate and nutrition policies in Tanzania. Despite growing recognition of their interconnectedness, policies remain largely fragmented and operate in silos, particularly across health, nutrition, and other food systems sectors. Food and agriculture policies lead in climate-nutrition integration by including concrete strategies and accountability mechanisms. However, outdated legacy policies, weak institutional coordination, and fragmented financing and data systems hinder effective integration and implementation. Key barriers include limited cross-sectoral collaboration, under-resourced coordination structures, and lack of shared data and financing mechanisms. Recommendations include establishing a national Climate–Nutrition Coordination Committee, implementing integrated financing tracking, adopting joint monitoring indicators, and promoting inclusive stakeholder engagement to strengthen policy coherence and accelerate impactful climate-nutrition action in Tanzania.



INTRODUCTION

Tanzania is increasingly recognizing the interconnected nature of climate change and nutrition challenges, particularly as climate-induced shocks, such as droughts, floods, and shifting rainfall patterns, continue to disrupt food systems and exacerbate vulnerabilities to malnutrition (URT, 2021a; FAO, 2022). National development priorities, articulated in frameworks such as the Third Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP III), the National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS), and the Agricultural Sector Development Programme Phase II (ASDP II), reflect a growing policy emphasis on resilience-building and sustainable agricultural transformation (URT, 2021b; URT, 2021c). However, integration of climate and nutrition considerations remains limited, with most interventions still implemented in sectoral silos rather than through coordinated, multisectoral policy frameworks (GAIN & I-CAN, 2023).

At the national level, several policy instruments touch on elements of climate adaptation, food systems resilience, and nutrition security. Notably, the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan II (NMNAP II) and the National Climate Smart Agriculture Programme (NCSAP) present key opportunities to institutionalize climate-nutrition integration (URT, 2021d; MoA, 2020). However, structural and institutional challenges persist, including overlapping mandates, fragmented implementation mechanisms, and insufficient budget to bring about desired policy change (SUN Movement, 2023; FAO & WHO, 2021). There is also a need to strengthen the use of evidence-based indicators and outcome tracking to assess the impacts of integrated interventions.

Recognising the need for greater understanding of and integration between climate and nutrition policies, the Initiative for Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN) was launched in 2022 by the Government of Egypt during COP27, in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), and the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. I-CAN is a global initiative that aims to accelerate transformative action at the intersection of climate and nutrition. By 2030, I-CAN envisions a world in which climate and nutrition agendas are fully integrated in policy, financing, research, and implementation. The initiative focuses on five strategic pillars, the first of

which is to support national-level integration by strengthening policy coherence in countries facing both climate vulnerability and high burdens of malnutrition. Specifically, I-CAN targets four key outcomes by 2030:

- 1. Policy coherence:** Greater integration of climate and nutrition across national policies, including NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), national nutrition plans, food-based dietary guidelines, and public food procurement standards.
- 2. Scaled-up action:** Accelerated implementation of climate and nutrition interventions.
- 3. Increased financing:** Mobilization of new and existing resources for integrated climate and nutrition agendas.
- 4. Cross-sectoral integration:** Enhanced alignment of research, advocacy, and policy to advance both nutrition and environmental goals.

METHODS

An assessment was conducted in May and June 2025 to describe the climate and nutrition policy and stakeholder landscape in Tanzania. A light-touch policy landscaping analysis drew from the content of 32 policies, encompassing policies that are active, formerly active, and at the draft stage. The policies reviewed cover the thematic categories of nutrition and health, climate and environment, food systems and agriculture, and general development. The policy landscaping findings were complemented by themes and results drawn from key informant interviews (KIIs) held with 7 Tanzanian nutrition and climate stakeholders, including government actors, development partners, academics, and more. To assess the level of nutrition and climate integration in each of the reviewed policies, the methodology outlined in the 2023 I-CAN Baseline Assessment was followed, which included a comprehensive keyword search completed using Python, a high-level computer programming language. Each policy was reviewed using the same Python code that was used in the 2023 I-CAN Baseline Assessment. The keywords used for screening were also based on the 2023 I-CAN Baseline Assessment methodology,

encompassing a grouping of nutrition keywords and a grouping of climate keywords. The level of nutrition and climate integration of each policy was then evaluated using the Baseline Assessment criteria:

Level 1: No intentional connectedness between climate and nutrition

Level 2: Some intention to connect climate and nutrition

Level 3: Intention to mobilise resources to connect climate and nutrition

Level 4: Commitment to mobilising resources and with distinct plans to take action to connect climate and nutrition



KEY RESULTS

Of the 34 policies reviewed, 9 were classified as Level 4 of integration, 2 as Level 3, 5 as Level 2, and 18 as Level 1.

Key result 1. Fragmented Policy Integration

Despite the growing recognition of the interconnectedness between climate change and nutrition, Tanzania's policy landscape remains largely fragmented, with most policies treating these issues in isolation. This disconnect is particularly pronounced in the health and nutrition sectors, where policies often fail to establish or act on the links between environmental change and nutritional outcomes. This siloed approach is echoed in findings from key informant interviews, which emphasized the structural and systemic challenges of cross-sectoral integration. Even when both climate and nutrition are mentioned within the same policy, they are rarely linked in meaningful ways. For example, the Policy Guidelines on School Health Services

mention both topics independently, but fail to integrate them. Moreover, several climate policies focus on food security broadly, without framing or incorporating nutrition-specific outcomes. This means overlooking critical pathways to address malnutrition in the face of climate stress. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that without deliberate and structured efforts to bridge policy domains, Tanzania risks implementing parallel efforts that are less effective or efficient in addressing the dual challenges of climate change and malnutrition.

Key result 2. Agriculture Policies Lead Integration

Among all the sectors reviewed, food systems and agriculture policies stand out as the most advanced in integrating climate and nutrition considerations. The analysis revealed that agricultural policies consistently acknowledge the dual impact of climate change on food systems and nutritional outcomes and, more importantly, many include concrete

strategies, budget allocations, and accountability structures to address this nexus. This sector's policies thus serve as benchmarks for integration. For example, the Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP) Phase II (2017) explicitly links its interventions to improved nutrition outcomes and climate resilience. Similarly, the Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Guidelines (2017) go further by naming the gap between available technologies and farmer uptake as a barrier to achieving climate-resilient nutrition outcomes. These policies are not just aspirational; many Food Systems and Agriculture Level 4 policies feature detailed implementation plans, indicators, timelines, and institutional responsibilities. The integration of nutrition-sensitive agriculture, post-harvest loss reduction, and climate adaptation strategies across this sector's policies demonstrates a mature understanding of the interdependence between environmental sustainability and human health.

Key result 3. Outdated and Legacy Policies Hinder Progress

A critical barrier to effective climate–nutrition integration in Tanzania is the continued reliance on outdated or "legacy" policies that predate both global climate frameworks and contemporary understandings of nutrition. These policies, while still legally in force or institutionally influential, lack relevance to today's climate challenges and nutrition priorities and thus significantly impede policy coherence and progress. The Food and Nutrition Policy (1992) is one of the most prominent examples of this. Though still legally active, it reflects a narrow view of nutrition challenges, focused primarily on undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, and completely omits climate change. Although subsequent National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plans (NMNAPs) have built upon the landmark 1992 Food and Nutrition Policy, the nearly 35-year old policy remains the central guiding framework for nutrition in Tanzania. Similarly, the National Forest Policy (1998) lacks any recognition of

how forest degradation (partly climate-driven) can affect nutrition, particularly through reduced access to wild foods and ecosystem services. These outdated documents appear to continue to shape institutional mandates and decision-making, despite being ill-suited to address the current climate–nutrition realities. This challenge is compounded by the slow pace of policy revision, meaning outdated frameworks remain active even as evidence and risks evolve rapidly. However, our analysis did find that newer policies, particularly in food and climate sectors, are beginning to bridge the gap. However, until the outdated legacy policies are formally revised or replaced, they will remain a structural constraint on progress.

Key result 4. Weak Institutional Coordination and Implementation

Despite growing policy recognition of the climate–nutrition nexus, Tanzania's institutional architecture remains fragmented, making integrated action difficult to implement. Coordination structures do exist (such as the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan (NMNAP)), but they are underutilized, under-resourced, or lack the decision-making authority to drive cross-sectoral alignment. This institutional weakness was repeatedly flagged in both the policy review and key informant interviews. Respondents also shared that there is a disconnect between national plans and sub-national execution. Local governments, which are essential to implementing integrated programs, often lack the capacity, guidance, or resources to act on climate–nutrition objectives. Even where integration is acknowledged as important, many stakeholders struggle to conceptualize or operationalize it due to a lack of shared definitions, frameworks, and joint planning tools. A national Climate–Nutrition Coordination Committee and/or the creation of Joint Technical Working Groups could help bridge these coordination gaps and help build capacity to conceptualize, plan, and implement integrated policy actions.



Key result 5. Lack of Integrated Financing and Data Systems

While Tanzania has made progress in policy development around both climate and nutrition, implementation is hampered by siloed financing mechanisms and fragmented data systems. This lack of integration undermines the country's ability to plan, budget, and monitor actions that simultaneously address climate change and malnutrition. This is a challenge consistently highlighted by both policy reviews and key informant interviews. Without a standardized system for joint financial planning, climate and nutrition interventions are typically funded through sector-specific lines with little coordination (presumably a leading cause of key finding four). This makes it difficult to identify, track, or scale investments that contribute to both climate resilience and improved nutritional outcomes. This challenge is further compounded by donor dependency, where integration efforts are often driven by external partners rather than embedded in national financing systems; this is an issue across development contexts. As far as data is concerned, similar silos exist. Nutrition data is managed through health sector systems, while climate and environmental data are held by different ministries and agencies with limited interoperability or shared analytics frameworks. Key informants cite that this fragmentation severely limits the government's ability to design evidence-based, costed, and accountable programs that target both climate vulnerability and nutrition outcomes.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Institutional Coordination.** Strengthen national coordination for integrated food systems governance by embedding climate–nutrition alignment within existing high-level structures, such as the NMNAP framework or broader food systems coordination platforms rather than creating entirely new ones. This could involve establishing a dedicated Climate–Nutrition Technical Working Group or subcommittee under existing food systems or nutrition coordination bodies. Doing so would enhance policy coherence and leverage existing institutional mandates while avoiding fragmentation or duplication of effort.
- **Financing.** Implement a standardized system to tag and track integrated expenditures across sectors, improving visibility, alignment, and accountability for climate–nutrition investments
- **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning.** Integrate joint climate–nutrition indicators into

national M&E systems. Develop and adopt shared indicators to measure the outcomes of climate and nutrition interventions, enabling coordinated tracking, evaluation, and adaptive learning.

- **Stakeholder Engagement.** Institutionalize community and civil society participation in policy design. Ensure that all food supply chain actors, local leaders, NGOs, and vulnerable groups are actively involved in designing and implementing climate–nutrition initiatives through participatory planning mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

Strengthening coherence between climate and nutrition policies offers a powerful opportunity to advance both human and environmental well-being in Tanzania. Integrated action can reduce undernutrition, build resilience to climate shocks, and promote more sustainable food systems that support livelihoods while safeguarding natural resources. A coordinated, inclusive, and evidence-driven policy approach will be essential to ensure healthier communities and a more resilient environment for generations to come.

REFERENCES

- FAO (2022). *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022*.
- GAIN & I-CAN (2023). *Global Baseline Report: Integration of Climate and Nutrition*.
- United Republic of Tanzania (URT) (2021a). *National Climate Change Response Strategy*.
- United Republic of Tanzania (URT) (2021b). *Third Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP III)*.
- United Republic of Tanzania (URT) (2021c). *Agricultural Sector Development Programme II (ASDP II)*.
- United Republic of Tanzania (URT) (2021d). *National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan II (NMNAP II)*.
- Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement (2023). *Tanzania Country Profile*
- FAO & WHO (2021). *Climate Change and Nutrition: Policy Brief*.
- Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) (2020). *National Climate Smart Agriculture Programme*.