

MAPPING OF INFLUENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS IN NUTRITION AND THE FOOD SYSTEM IN RWANDA



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Disclaimer

This report shares the results of a 2024 national mapping of actors working in nutrition and food systems in Rwanda, carried out by the Swiss TPH team under guidance from the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) and the National Child Development Agency (NCDA), with co-funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The information reflects contributions from stakeholders and sources available at the time of the study. While care has been taken to ensure accuracy, the authors cannot guarantee that all information is complete or up to date. Inclusion or omission of any organization does not imply endorsement or judgment. Readers are encouraged to use this report as a reference and to confirm details before making decisions.

ABBREVIATIONS

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPEM	District Plan for the Elimination of Malnutrition
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
JADF	Joint Action Development Forums
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KII	Key Informant Interview
LODA	Local Administrative Entities Development Agency
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINEMA	Ministry in charge of Emergency Management
MOH	Ministry of Health
NAEB	National Agricultural Export Development Board
NCDA	National Child Development Agency
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PMO	Prime Minister Office
RAB	Rwanda Agriculture Board
RBA	Rwanda Broadcasting Agency
RBC	Rwanda Biomedical Centre
RCA	Rwanda Cooperative Agency
RDB	Rwanda Development Board
RDHS	Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey
REB	Rwanda Basic Education Board
RFDA	Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
RTB	Rwanda TVET Board
Swiss TPH	Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nation Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

SUMMARY

Rwanda faces persistent challenges with malnutrition, and there is increasing interest in the country in taking a food systems approach to tackling it. However, getting this new approach into the development and agricultural sector's agendas requires understanding the landscape of actors involved. In response, the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition commissioned an analytical mapping of actors involved in nutrition and the food system in Rwanda, which was implemented by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute. This was accomplished by conducting a stakeholder mapping at district and national levels through key informant interviews and Net-Map analysis as well as a policy landscape analysis. The results identified strengths and areas of improvement within collaborations in Rwanda's nutrition and food system including leadership and political will at a national level for nutritious food systems in Rwanda as well as the need for strengthening coordination of private-sector actors and increasing multi-sectoral coordination in order to effectively use resources. The insights derived from this mapping will guide GAIN's collaboration with MINAGRI and its partners to identify most critical actors involved in nutrition and food systems, fostering stronger partnerships to develop and implement a nutrition-sensitive Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation.

KEY MESSAGES

- Rwanda has made significant progress in enhancing nutrition across the country, yet malnutrition persists. Understanding key stakeholders and policies within the country is crucial for identifying actions to break this impasse.
- This stakeholder mapping highlights a number of influential stakeholders in the country's food and nutrition policy landscape.
- The results demonstrated leadership at a national level as well as the need for increasing multi-sectoral coordination to effectively utilise resources and work towards a more nutritious food system in Rwanda.
- If the recommendations proposed in this report are acted upon, Rwanda will be better positioned to develop and implement a nutrition-sensitive Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation and progress toward its ambitious nutrition goals, contributing to healthier communities.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

Rwanda has made significant progress in enhancing nutrition across the country, yet malnutrition remains a critical public health issue. According to the Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey (RDHS) 2019-2020, 33% of children under five were stunted, indicating chronic malnutrition, while 1% were wasted, reflecting acute malnutrition (1). Stunting disproportionately affects the poorest households, children born to women with lower education levels, and children living in rural areas. Chronic malnutrition is influenced by various factors, including eating insufficient amounts, consuming inadequate quantities of nutritious foods, and suffering from chronic diseases or infections. Micronutrient deficiencies are also a concern, with 37% of children under five and 19% of women of reproductive age suffering from anaemia (1). Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government of Rwanda has set ambitious targets to reduce malnutrition, aiming to lower the malnutrition rate from 33% to 15% by 2030 (2), to 5.5% and 3% by 2035 and 2050, respectively (3). It has shown commitment by implementing enabling policies and programmes to address malnutrition, such as the National Agriculture Policy 2018 (4), the National Food and Nutrition Policy 2014 (5), and the Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation – PSTA4 (6). The government, in collaboration with partners, has also initiated and supported various community-based nutrition programmes and school feeding initiatives.

A well-functioning food system ensures that all individuals have access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food, which is essential for maintaining a healthy population. In Rwanda, smallholder farmers dominate the agricultural sector and are vital in providing diverse food products that form the basis of Rwandan's diet across the country (7). Initiatives such as providing small-stock animals (chickens and pigs) and promoting kitchen gardens directly contribute to improving household nutrition by increasing the availability of animal-source foods and vegetables (8). Furthermore, the government's focus on fortifying staple foods and enhancing dietary diversity through the National Food and Nutrition Policy underscores the direct impact of agricultural policies on nutritional outcomes (9). By investing in nutrition-sensitive agricultural practices, such as biofortification and climate-smart agriculture, the government aims to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition. This holistic approach aims to ensure that the food system not only boosts agricultural productivity but also contributes to the nutritional well-being of the population, thereby fostering a healthier and more resilient society (10).

To inform future efforts, this paper assesses the current policy landscape related to nutrition and the food system in Rwanda and presents an analytical mapping of the key stakeholders involved in nutrition and the food system in Rwanda and to understand their roles, perspectives, connection, and influence among each other.

METHODOLOGY

Working collaboratively with Rwanda's Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI) and GAIN, Swiss TPH implemented a multi-faceted approach to the stakeholder mapping. Firstly, stakeholder lists from key central-level institutions, including the Rwanda Cooperative Agency (RCA) and the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), were obtained to identify cooperatives, civil society organisations (CSOs), and private-sector entities involved in the nutrition and food systems. Following this initial mapping, primary data were collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) with Joint Action Development Forums (JADF) officers across 16 districts to compare the data obtained at central level from RCA and RDB to the reality in the field based on the JADF's perspectives. To further complement the data, a net-mapping exercise was conducted with key national stakeholders to also obtain their

perspectives. Lastly, a thorough review of existing policies related to Rwanda's nutrition and food system was conducted to deepen understanding of the policy landscape and contextualise the study's findings.

DATA COLLECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF NATIONAL-LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS

Interviews with stakeholders at the national level were conducted in person by two experienced researchers, who were fluent in English and Kinyarwanda between 7 October and 8 November 2024. Each interviewee provided written consent to participate as well as verbal agreement for the interview to be recorded. MINAGRI, GAIN, and Swiss TPH co-developed semi-structured interview guides, which were used together with the net-mapping tool to collect the data (see more details below).

Through consultations between GAIN and Swiss TPH, 21 key national stakeholders, who were engaged in nutrition and the food system in Rwanda, were identified to be interviewed. This group encompassed representatives of nine different stakeholder categories, including the government, NGOs, CSOs, United Nations (UN) agencies, the private sector, the media, development partners/ donors, technical working groups (TWGs), and academia or research institutions. Each organization received an email request to nominate a technical expert in the field of nutrition and/ or the food system for the interview. In case of a non-response, a follow up email was sent or, if available, a follow up phone call was made. Out of the 21 potential actors, 17 participated in the interview and are included in this analysis. Interviewees included leaders and senior staff from the preselected organizations (see Table 1).

Table 1: National level data collection, by stakeholder category (N=17)

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder name	Stakeholder acronym
Government	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources	MINAGRI
Government	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning	MINECOFIN
Government	Ministry of Education	MINEDUC
Government	Ministry of Health	MOH
Government	National Child Development Agency	NCDA
Government	Rwanda Cooperative Agency	RCA
Development partner/donor	Japan International Cooperation Agency	JICA
Development partner/donor	United States Agency for International Development	USAID
United Nations Agency	United Nations Children's Fund	UNICEF
United Nations Agency	World Food Programme	WFP
NGO	Sustainably Growing Africa's Food System	AGRA
NGO	World Relief International	
CSO	Association of Consumer Rights Protection	ADECOR
CSO	SUN Alliance	
Academia/ research institute	AKADEMIYA2063	
Private sector	Africa Improved Food	AIF
Media	TV 10	

NET-MAP PROCESS

Prior to starting the data collection, the net-mapping tool and process were piloted during a two-day in-person workshop in Kigali. Net-map is a participatory interview technique that examines the power, goals, and perspectives of various stakeholders, and looks at how these stakeholders interact with each other with regards to different relationships including formal authority, funding, technical and/or policy advice, and coordination (11–13). During the workshop, the data collectors were introduced to the net-mapping tool and could familiarize themselves with the process. The net-mapping process was piloted with two independent interviewees, which helped to refine the list of potential influential actors.

Before each interview, one researcher prepared a flipchart displaying the main research question at the top: “***Who is influential in promoting coordinated action among national food system actors towards healthier diets and decreased malnutrition in Rwanda?***”. Based on the preselection made by GAIN and Swiss TPH, potential influential stakeholders were noted on colour-coded Post-it notes that were placed on the outside of the flipchart by category. Each colour corresponded to a different stakeholder category. The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide to lead the interview through the exercise. As the first step, the participant had to identify who they perceive as the most influential actors. The corresponding Post-it notes were placed in the centre of the flipchart. Subsequently,

participants reviewed the relationship among actors, and were specifically asked to respond to the following questions:

- Which stakeholder on the map has formal authority over which other?
- Which stakeholder provides funding to whom?
- Which stakeholder provides technical and/or policy advice to whom?
- Which stakeholder coordinates with whom?

Connections among stakeholders were represented by arrows of varying colours, each indicating one of the four types of relationships (e.g., black colour indicating formal authority). Eventually, each participant rated the stakeholders' influence on a scale from six (most influential) to zero (least influential) using checkers that were placed on the respective stakeholder's Post-it note (see Figure 1). A table with the full list of actors and their acronyms can be found in Annex 1.



Figure 1. Example of a net-map

DATA COLLECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF DISTRICT LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS

KIIs were conducted in-person by trained data collectors between 30 September and 3 October 2024. Prior to the data collection phase, Swiss TPH conducted a training session for the data collectors to ensure they knew how to use the data collection tool, as well as being familiar with ethical considerations for conducting the interview. Each JADF provided written consent to participate and verbal agreement for the interview to be recorded. Data collection utilized a semi-structured interview guide that was translated from English into Kinyarwanda. A total of 16 KIIs in different districts across all five different provinces were conducted. The districts were purposefully selected to have geographical representation and ensure each province was covered and to have a balanced mix of high- and low-performing districts in terms of progress in reducing malnutrition (see Table 2).

Table 2: Selected districts for key informant interview by province (N=16)

Province	Districts
North (N=3)	Gicumbi, Rulindo, Musanze.
East (N=4)	Nyagatare, Rwamagana, Kirehe, Bugesera
South (N=4)	Muhanga, Nyanza, Nyamagabe, Gisagara
West (N=4)	Rubavu, Karongi, Rusizi, Ngororero
Kigali City (N=1)	Gasabo

During each interview, the JADF reviewed databases from RCA and RDB to identify the most influential actors in their districts. For each identified actor, they were asked a series of targeted questions to assess their capacities, resources, and obtain other relevant details. Additionally, the interviews gained broader insights into the district's nutrition and food system, such as whether the district has a coordination body for nutrition and food systems.

POLICY REVIEW

To supplement the primary data collection, a comprehensive policy review was conducted, seeking to identify pertinent policies and initiatives related to nutrition and the food system. Policies and initiatives were identified through different avenues, such as online searches on the websites of the Government of Rwanda and the different ministries included in the net-mapping. If an interviewee highlighted a particular relevant policy that had not been found, it was manually added to the results.

DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Net-map, including data management and visualization

Following each interview, a photo of the net-map was taken and uploaded to a designated Google Drive file. Subsequently, an Excel sheet was created with five different tabs. The first tab listed the stakeholders along with their assigned power ratings as perceived by the interviewee; while the remaining sheets detailed formal authority links, funding connections, technical/policy advice, and coordination relationships. One researcher entered data on a rolling basis, and the list of stakeholders was updated iteratively. Upon completion of the data entry, a second researcher performed a quality check and reviewed each Excel sheet to ensure the data was entered correctly from the photos. The Excel sheets were submitted to GAIN, which used Social Network Analysis to generate visualizations of five net-maps, illustrating the interconnections among stakeholders. All connections were displayed in the visuals, regardless of the number of individuals who confirmed a particular link.

Qualitative data analysis

The narratives from each national-level interview were imported into ATLAS.ti for management and coding. Coding was done by three researchers who applied the codes to a set of interviews using a predefined coding framework. The coding was interactively refined. Uncertainties were resolved through discussions among the research team. After the coding was completed, all codes were extracted into Excel sheets. Each code was summarized by one of the three researchers, and summaries were analysed and discussed among the team.

District data management and analysis

Two Excel databases were developed to store the district data. The first database contained detailed information from the assessment of influential district stakeholders. The second database provided general insights into food systems and nutrition per district from JADF's perspective. To enhance the report's findings, the database with key district stakeholders was reviewed and compared to the list of key actors at national level to provide a more holistic understanding of who is working at both levels and to supplement the findings from the net-map visuals. Furthermore, a short summary of key actor-specific information, such as areas of work and size, was extracted from the database and included in this report.

SWOT ANALYSIS AND STAKEHOLDER VALIDATION WORKSHOP

Upon completing the analysis, the research team convened a one-day internal consultation to review the visual net-maps, validate the findings from the narratives, to conduct a SWOT (Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats) analysis and to co-develop recommendations for the report. Subsequently, the report was drafted, which including preliminary findings that were validated in a stakeholder workshop attended by 90 participants on 17 December 2024. After the workshop, feedback received was incorporated into the analysis.

RESULTS

KEY NATIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The Government of Rwanda has developed multiple comprehensive strategies and policies aimed at improving the national food system and addressing malnutrition. These strategies are designed to promote agricultural productivity, ensure food security, and improve nutritional outcomes for the population. A list with the key national policies and initiatives can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Key policies and initiatives related to nutrition and food systems in Rwanda

Policy name	Description
National Agriculture Policy (2018) (4)	This policy provides the framework for agricultural development in Rwanda, emphasizing food security, nutritional health, sustainable agriculture, increased productivity, and market-oriented farming. It seeks to contribute to fostering wealth, economic opportunities, enhancing nutrition and food security as well as sustainability.
National Food and Nutrition Policy (2014) (14)	This policy outlines Rwanda's strategic approach to improving nutrition across the population. It focuses on enhancing dietary diversity, maternal and child nutrition, and fortifying staple foods. It also emphasizes multi-sectoral collaboration to address malnutrition comprehensively.

Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA 4) (2018-2024) (6)	This strategic plan aims to transform Rwanda's agriculture from subsistence to a market-oriented sector. It includes measures to improve agricultural productivity, enhance food security, and promote value addition through processing and packaging. It has a strong focus on private sector engagement.
Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA 5) (2024-2029) (15)	PSTA 5 focuses on enhancing nutrition and food systems in Rwanda through increased agricultural productivity, climate-smart practices, and strengthened market linkages. It aims to reduce stunting rates from 32.4% to 15%, improve post-harvest handling to halve losses, and expand participation in value chains from 25% to 60%. Key initiatives include developing irrigation, establishing food hubs, and promoting nutrient-rich crops such as fruit trees for combating malnutrition.
National Strategy for Transformation (NSTI) 2017-2024 (16)	The NSTI is Rwanda's overarching development strategy that integrates economic, social, and governance pillars. It includes goals related to improving agricultural productivity, ensuring food security, and enhancing nutrition outcomes.
National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) 2024-2029 (2)	The NST2 aims to transform Rwanda's nutrition and food systems by boosting agricultural productivity, promoting climate-resilient practices, and reducing stunting from 33% to below 15%. Key actions include sustainable land management, improved irrigation, enhanced livestock productivity, and reducing post-harvest losses. The strategy prioritizes nutrition-focused programmes, value addition, and strengthening market linkages to ensure food security and economic growth.
National Early Childhood Development Programme Strategic Plan (2018-2024) (17)	This strategic plan for early childhood development, including health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, outlines the strategic directions to ensure that children have the opportunity to thrive, grow and develop.
National Family and Nutrition Policy (2024) (18)	This policy focuses on improving multiple forms of malnutrition, including undernutrition, over nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies to improve maternal nutrition, child-feeding practices, WASH food security and animal source food production and consumption.
Initiative name	Description
Girinka initiative (One Cow per poor Family) (19)	This programme aims to improve household nutrition and income by providing a cow to families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The programme seeks to improve nutritional outcomes by providing families with milk and other animal-sourced foods, strengthening the family's consumption of these foods and providing them with purchasing power, as they can sell milk and dairy products on the market.
Kitchen gardens (20)	This initiative is used to provide households in Rwanda with a sustainable and nutritious food source through a vegetable garden, potentially alongside small animals and agroforestry practices, to enhance food security.
Fruit trees per households (21)	This national campaign encourages each household to plant at least three fruit trees to improve nutrition and food security, in alignment

	with PSTA4. It also supports sustainable agroforestry practices and enhances soil health and overall agricultural productivity.
School feeding programme (22)	Rwanda's National School Feeding Programme, based on the National Comprehensive School Feeding Policy from 2019, offers a hot meal to students in primary and secondary public schools. It started in 2020 and seeks to improve education outcomes and enhance long-run productivity.

KEY REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Rwanda has endorsed the 2030 Agenda at the highest level. Rwanda's Vision 2020 and the subsequent National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024 are closely aligned with the SDGs. For instance, SDG2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) are reflected in Rwanda's efforts to improve food security through initiatives like PSTA 4.

At the regional level, Rwanda endorsed Agenda 2063, the African Union's strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years. Rwanda's development policies resonate with several key aspirations of Agenda 2063, such as inclusive growth, sustainable development, and good governance. The Girinka programme initiative and other government-led agricultural initiatives, such as crop and fertilizer subsidies, support the goal of ending hunger and achieving food security, which aligns with Aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063 (***A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development***). Aspiration 1 emphasizes agricultural modernization, climate-resilient farming, and infrastructure development to ensure food security and economic access to nutritious food. The African Continental Free Trade Area, which promotes trade among African countries, is a core mechanism to achieve a prosperous society, economic growth and an improved infrastructure, as outlined in the objectives of Aspiration 1. Aspiration 6 (***An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children***) promotes gender equality and youth access to the job market, health, and education. It aims to empower women, youth, and communities to participate in transforming food systems. Together, these initiatives support sustainable, locally driven food production to create a self-reliant food system in Africa that will support the reduction of malnutrition and improve overall well-being.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NETWORK OF ACTORS BASED ON PERCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Influential actors involved in nutrition and food systems

The interviewees collectively identified 133 influential actors at the national level seeking to improve nutrition and food systems across the country. Out of these, the majority were government actors (n=34; 26%), followed by NGOs (n=30; 23%). TWGs (n=2; 2%) and UN agencies (n=6; 6%) were less present among the influential actors (Figure 2). Out of all actors, around a third is addressing multiple priorities (n=49; 37%) and food security (n=44; 33%), while less than 20% of actors prioritized nutrition (n=23) and agricultural practices (n=17). A list of all key actors can be found in Annex 1.

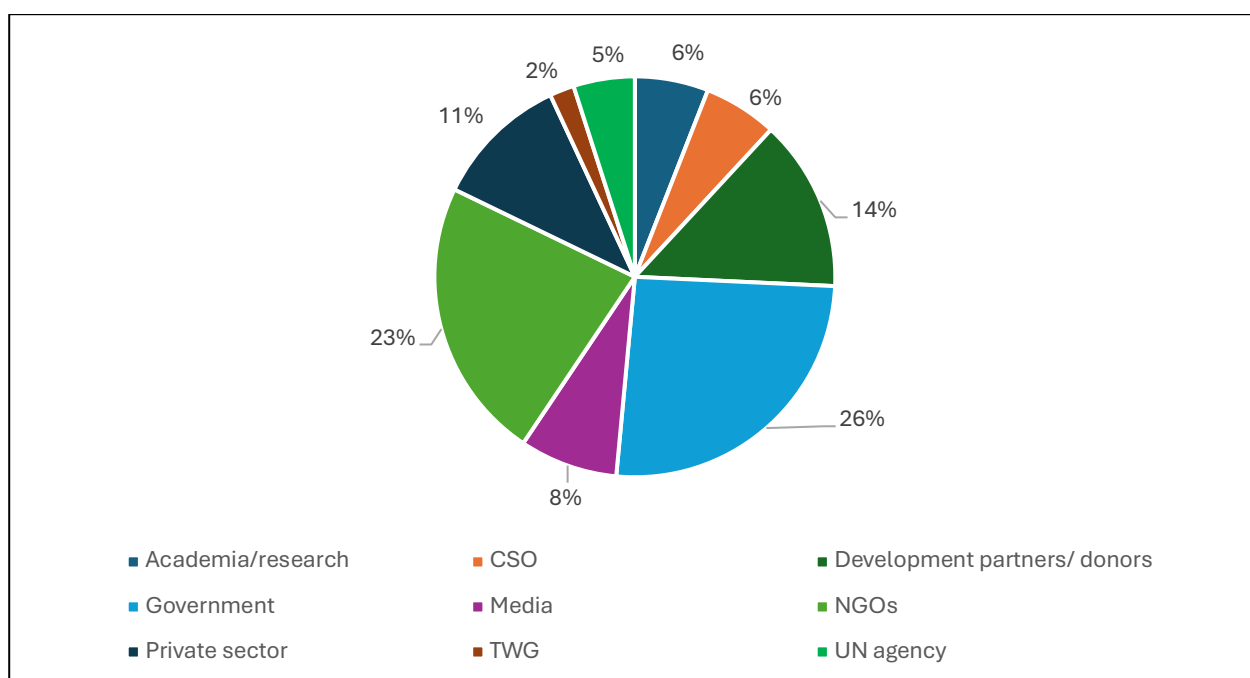


Figure 2. Proportion of influential stakeholders by category

The net-map in Figure 3 highlights the relationship among the 133 actors according to the interviewees' perceptions. It shows that multiple government actors, such as the National Child Development Agency (NCDA), the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN), MINAGRI, the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), and the Ministry of Health (MOH) are highly connected and important organizations based on the number of interactions they have with other entities in the network. Similarly, the United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF), as the only UN agency, shows it is highly engaged in the network, indicating it has important connections and/ or information based on interviewees perceptions.

Measures of centrality show that NCDA, MINECOFIN, and MINAGRI are considered the most connected entities in this network by respondents, as shown by the number of links going away or towards them. While these three bodies have the most incoming links, which indicates interviewees perceived them as the entities that receive a lot of support or are coordinating with many other agencies, the stakeholders with the most outgoing links are MINECOFIN, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), and NCDA, indicating the substantial provision of support to and coordination with other stakeholders. Although the net-map shows a highly connected cluster of actors, there are many stakeholders at the outside, indicating less engagement and connections within the network. According to respondents, stakeholders of three different categories (the government, development partners, and UN agencies) are considered highly powerful, as they were allocated the highest power scores. These include the President, PMO, MINECOFIN, MINAGRI, MINALOC, MOH, NCDA, as government entities, who predominantly hold substantial formal authority over others; UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) as UN agencies that provide both technical and financial assistance; and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as the most influential donor at the time. Table 4 provide a legend for the net-map on formal authority.

Table 4. Key information about the net-map of influential stakeholders in Figure 3

Category	Actor(s)	Key Insights
Highly connected government actors	NCDA, MINECOFIN, MINAGRI, MINALOC, MINEDUC, MOH	Central actors with many interactions, coordinating with multiple entities
Highly connected UN actors	UNICEF	UNICEF plays a crucial role in coordination and information sharing.
Entities with the most incoming links	NCDA, MINECOFIN, MINAGRI	NCDA, MINECOFIN, and MINAGRI are seen as recipients of significant support.
Entities with the most outgoing links	MINECOFIN, PMO, NCDA	MINECOFIN, PMO, and NCDA provide substantial support and coordination.
Actors with fewer engagement/connections	Other stakeholders on the outside of the central cluster	Peripheral actors have fewer connections, indicating lower network engagement.
Most powerful actors (High Power Scores)	President, PMO, MINECOFIN, MINAGRI, MINALOC, MOH, NCDA (Government), UNICEF, WFP (UN Agencies), USAID (Donor)	Government entities, UN agencies, and donors hold substantial power due to authority and resources

Formal authority links among stakeholders

The net-map in Figure 4 illustrates formal authority relationships and dynamics among stakeholders engaged in nutrition and the food system in Rwanda based on interview respondents' perceptions. The net-map largely consists of government entities with the President, PMO, and MINECOFIN at the centre. These three key actors are highly connected among the network, indicating their authority over entities, policies, and priorities according to interviewees. While the president holds ultimate authority over the other stakeholders, the PMO coordinates with ministries and ensures policy coherence, while the Parliament – though a bit further on the outside – provides legislative oversight by reviewing and approving policies. The President oversees the Strategy and Policy Council, which drives strategic priorities and planning across all levels of governance, holds an advisory role and provides support with policy formulation and direction. While the Council is considered influential by one interviewee, it operates behind the scenes. The President, PMO, and MINECOFIN hold formal authority over all ministries, who in turn commonly have formal authority over the agencies within their ministries. For example, apart from financial decisions, MINECOFIN oversees the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), while MINAGRI supervises agriculture-focused institutions such as the Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB) and the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB) to support the agricultural sector. Similarly, MINALOC promotes decentralized governance through the Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA), Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), Rwanda Broadcasting Agency (RBA) and NGOs, while the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) ensures family-centred strategies are implemented by NCDA. In the health sector, MOH oversees the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) and the Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority (RFDA) to manage health policies, whereas MINICOM connects trade-related agencies such as the Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture and RCA to economic goals and holds formal authority over private sector entities. Furthermore, MINEDUC oversees educational development and vocational training through the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) and Rwanda TVET Board (RTB). Development partners and donors are not present in this net-map, highlighting their lack of formal authority. The table 5 below shows the summarized legend for Figure 4.

Table 5. Key information about the formal authority net-map in Figure 4

Category	Actor(s)	Key Insights
Key Government actors	President, PMO, MINECOFIN	Hold central formal authority in the network, making decisions on policies, priorities, and, resources.
Policy coordination and oversight	PMO, Parliament	Coordinate ministries, ensure policy coherence, and provide legislative oversight.
Ministry supervision of Agencies	MINECOFIN, MINAGRI, MINALOC, MINEDUC, MOH, MINICOM	Supervise agencies within their respective ministries, implementing policies in various sectors.
Sector-specific oversight	MOH, MINAGRI, MINALOC, MIGEPROF	Provide sector-specific oversight and ensure policy implementation in areas like health, agriculture, and gender.
Education and Vocational Training	MINEDUC	Oversee educational development and vocational training.
Private sector and economic goals	MINICOM	Link trade-related agencies to economic goals and exercise formal authority over the private sector.



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Funding relationships among stakeholders

The net-map in Figure 5 shows funding relationships between various actors involved in nutrition and the food system in Rwanda. According to the interviewees, MINECOFIN is the stakeholder that receives the most budget through different avenues, such as the government and donors, including the European Union (EU), Global Fund, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), USAID, and the World Bank. MINECOFIN then allocates the funds across ministries. According to an interviewee, each ministry can spend the amount MINECOFIN allocated to them, which can lead to constraints and may prompt the ministries to reduce or adapt activities. MINICOM provides funds to various private sector entities, such as Minimex and Sosoma Industries. Table 6 below includes the summarized legend for Figure 5.

Table 6. Key information about the funding net-map in Figure 5

Category	Actor(s)	Key Insights
Primary funding recipient	MINECOFIN	Receives the most budget from both the government and donors (EU, Global Fund, JICA, USAID, World Bank), and allocates funds across ministries.
Funds allocation	MINECOFIN, ministries	MINECOFIN allocates funds to ministries, which may face constraints and may need to reduce or adapt activities based on the allocated amount.
UN funding support	UN agency (UNICEF, UNDP, WHO)	Multiple UN agencies, distribute funds to ministries or local NGOs.
Private sector funding	MINICOM, Private sector entities	MINICOM provides funds to various private sector entities to support their operations and involvement in the food system.

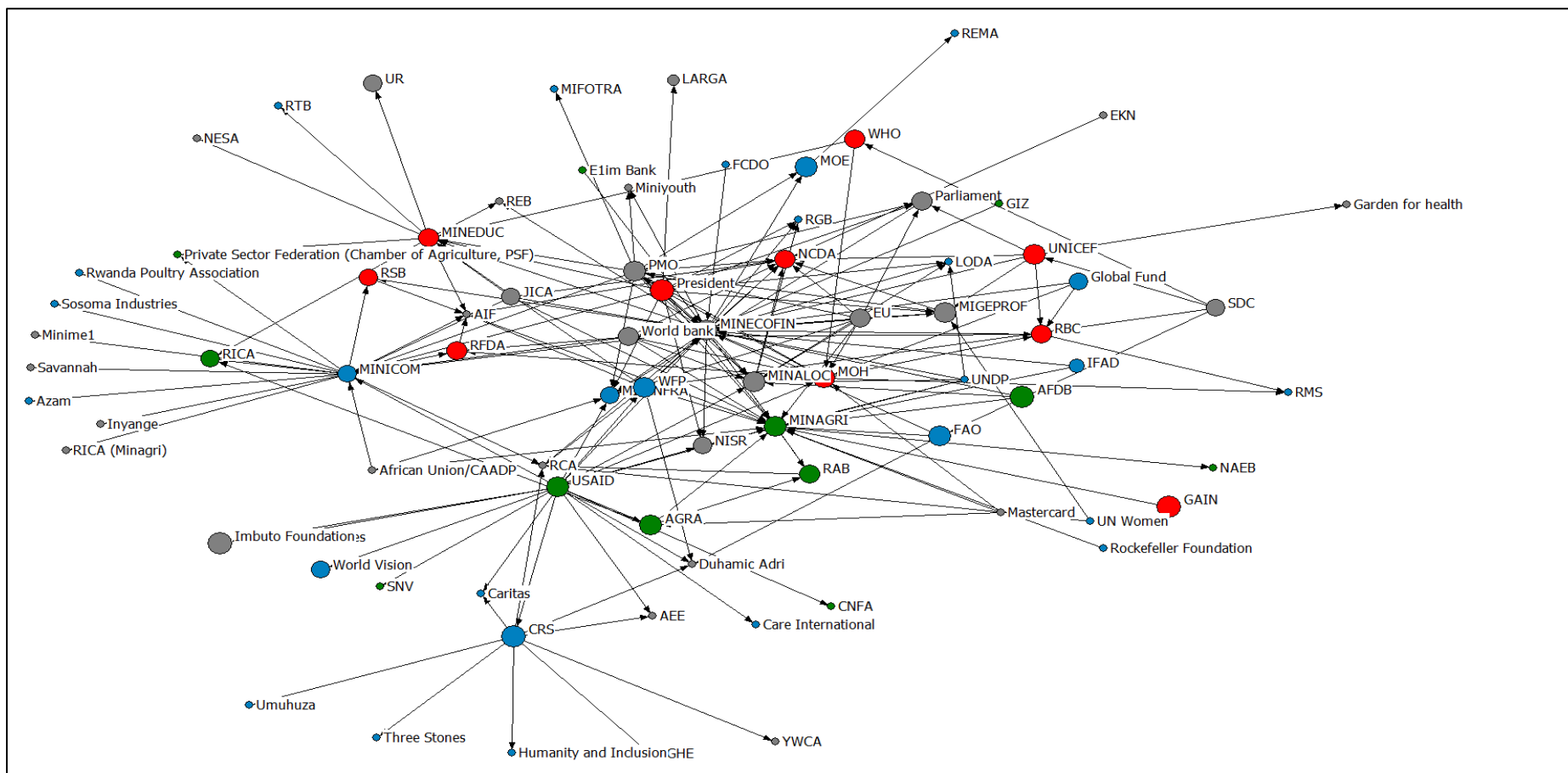


Figure 5. Funding relationship among nutrition and food system stakeholders in Rwanda²

² Key: The colours show four different actor priorities (Green: Agriculture productivity; Red: Nutrition; Blue: Food security; Grey: Multiple)

Some ministries and government entities, such as MINAGRI, MOH, MINALOC, and NCDA, receive budget not only from the government but also directly from development partners or UN agencies. According to the net-map, USAID and the World Bank predominantly finance stakeholders that prioritize agricultural productivity, food security or have multiple priorities, in comparison to nutrition. USAID also directly funds various NGOs in Rwanda, such as CARE International, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and World Vision. The World Bank allocates funds to multiple ministries through the government under the Stunting Prevention and Reduction Project. USAID and the World Bank were praised by many interviewees for their financial contributions.

“I want to start with USAID, without them, many people would starve. They fund a lot of projects to do with nutrition. They have provided a lot of funding and are very impactful. They may not provide the same amount of funding as the World Bank, but they offer aid and not loans.” (Stakeholder category 1)

“Let’s start with the EU, World Bank, USAID, MasterCard, and WFP, all of these organizations provide significant funds to the government. For example, the World Bank supports MINAGRI directly, funding agricultural initiatives aimed at improving food security and nutrition. Similarly, the EU also contributes to MINAGRI, enhancing agricultural productivity. USAID plays a key role as well, offering support to MINAGRI in areas like improved farming practices and food distribution. However, it’s important to note that organizations like the EU, World Bank, and USAID don’t just stop at one ministry. Their support often spans across multiple ministries, directly or indirectly impacting healthier diets and reducing malnutrition. For instance, if the EU supports MININFRA in road construction within a certain area, this indirectly benefits nutrition by improving the distribution of crops. Better infrastructure ensures that food reaches more people efficiently, which positively affects dietary diversity and helps combat malnutrition. In essence, their contributions cross-cut all relevant ministries, addressing the broader issue of nutrition from multiple angles.” (Stakeholder category 2)

Furthermore, multiple UN agencies, such as UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Health Organization (WHO) distribute funds to ministries or local NGOs, according to interviewees’ opinions. For example, UNICEF and WFP provide budget to MINEDUC for school feeding activities and WHO funds the MOH for nutrition and health-related activities. Few NGOs also distribute funds, such as CRS and GAIN.

This net-map shows that many NGOs that are prioritizing food security or have multiple priorities receive funding; NGOs whose sole priorities are nutrition or agriculture are less present in the diagram.

Technical/ policy advice relationships among stakeholders

The net-map in Figure 6 shows the relationship of stakeholders related to technical and policy advice in the food system and nutrition network in Rwanda, based on interviewees’ perspectives. The diagram depicts the presence of a range of actors with a variety of priorities. According to the respondents, MINAGRI has the most interactions with other entities and shows the highest level of connectedness, as shown by many incoming arrows indicating the organization receives a lot of policy or technical advice. Other government entities, such as MINECOFIN, MOH, MINICOM, MINEDUC, and MIGEPROF also receive a substantial amount of technical support. It is evident from the net-map that actors with similar priorities are well connected among each other (i.e. the red cluster (nutrition) around NCDA and MOH and the green cluster (agriculture productivity) around MINAGRI). Few actors such as WFP are connected to stakeholders with differing priorities. According

to the stakeholder interviews, some donors (EU, JICA, USAID) and UN agencies (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNICEF, WFP, WHO) provide technical assistance to multiple government entities and NGOs. For example, UNICEF supports MIGEPROF, MOH, RBC, and NCDA with the development of nutrition-related guidelines. GAIN is the only NGO that provides technical advice to three government bodies. Similarly, AIF is the only private entity that provides technical assistance to multiple agencies, though the interview respondents do not consider AIF influential. Sun CSO is well connected to multiple NGOs and provides a lot of technical, and policy advice to them, though it is less connected to any of the government or UN agencies, and donors. Requests for technical or policy advice typically originate from the government and are directed to a UN agency or donor, who technically support in a designated area.

“But then from an outside perspective, it’s also on who is being requested by the government to help with policy and strategy development. So then, you also have UNICEF for the adolescent nutrition guidelines, but UNICEF is doing it together with World Bank. And then you have us (WFP) on the school feeding front. And then you have FAO on the food-based dietary guidelines or safety and quality standards. So, it depends on who the government is also asking. Of course, (...) people can provide unsolicited advice, but this government is not going to take it if they didn’t ask.”
(Stakeholder category 3)

Table 7 provides a summary of key information for figure 6.

Table 7. Key information about the technical and policy advice net-map in Figure 6

Category	Actor(s)	Key Insights
Primary source of technical support	MINAGRI, MINECOFIN, MOH, MINICOM, MINEDUC, MIGEPROF	These government actors receive significant technical and policy advice from various sources, including other government bodies, UN agencies, and donors.
Well-connected priority clusters	NCDA and MOH (nutrition cluster), MINAGRI (agriculture)	Actors within these clusters are closely connected, due to shared priorities in nutrition and agriculture.
Technical assistance providers	EU, JICA, USAID, FAO, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, GAIN, AIF, Sun CSO	Donors, UN agencies, and NGOs provide technical assistance to multiple government entities and NGOs, with specialized expertise in specific areas.
Unique technical assistance providers	UNICEF, GAIN, AIF, Sun CSO	UNICEF focuses on nutrition, GAIN provides advice to multiple government bodies, AIF offers assistance across agencies, and Sun CSO supports NGOs.

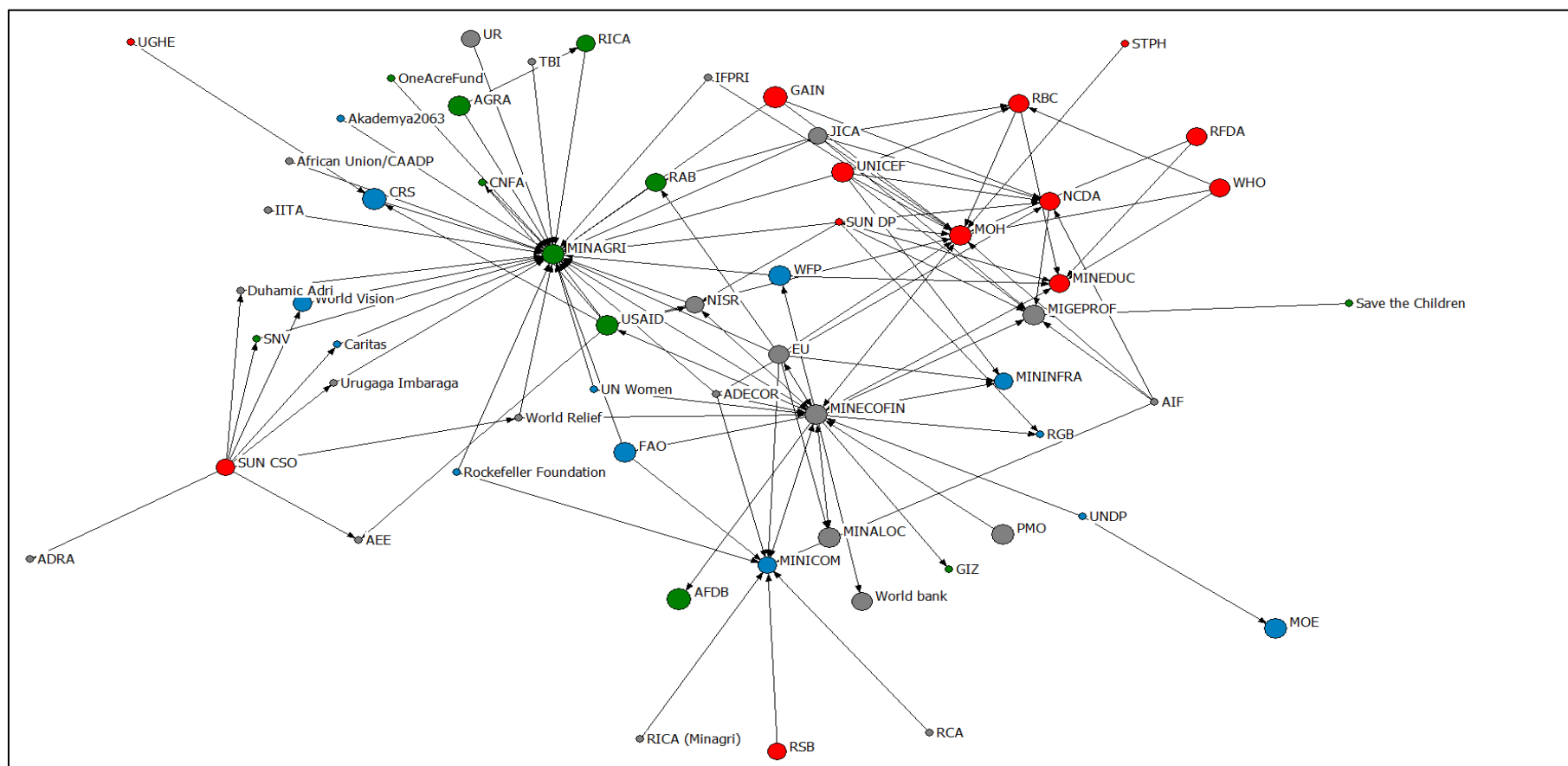


Figure 6. Relationships related to technical and policy advice among nutrition and food system stakeholders in Rwanda³

³ Key: The colours show four different actor priorities (Green: Agriculture productivity; Red: Nutrition; Blue: Food security; Grey: Multiple).

Coordination relationships among stakeholders

The net-map on coordination (Figure 7) highlights the involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders from government ministries, UN agencies, NGOs, donors, and the private sector. According to the respondents, NCDA is central and its position within this network underscores its critical role as a cross-sectoral coordinating body by linking government ministries, development partners, NGOs, the private sector, the media, CSOs and district-level actors. According to the map, the agency is well connected and coordinates with almost everyone, highlighted by the number of links to other actors. Nonetheless, there are a couple of actors on the outside of the net-map that do not collaborate with NCDA and the wider network, such as the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) and Partners in health, who are connected to one stakeholder only. Table 8 below is the summarized legend for Figure 7.

Table 8. Key information about the coordination net-map in Figure 7

Category	Actor(s)	Key Insights
Central coordination entity	NCDA	NCDA plays a central role in cross-sectoral coordination, linking ministries, development partners, NGOs, private sector, media, CSOs, and district-level actors.
Well-connected entities	Government ministries, development partners, NGOs, private sector, media, CSOs	These actors are well connected and collaborate closely with NCDA and others in the network for efficient coordination.
Limited coordination	MINEMA, RICH, Partners in Health	These actors are on the periphery of the network and are only connected to a limited number of stakeholders, indicating limited coordination.

Based on interviewees' perceptions, key ministries, including MINEDUC, MINICOM, MINAGRI, MOH, and MINALOC maintain robust connections amongst themselves and work closely with government agencies, such as RAB, RCA, and REB. A couple of ministries also coordinate their efforts across sectors. For instance, MINAGRI facilitates agricultural productivity and nutrition initiatives through partnerships with institutions such as RAB, MOH, and global partners such as FAO and UNICEF. MINEDUC collaborates with NCDA and MINAGRI, along with external partners such as UNICEF and World Vision to implement school feeding programmes. The dense interconnections among various government and UN actors reflects extensive collaboration but may also highlight overlapping in roles and responsibilities.

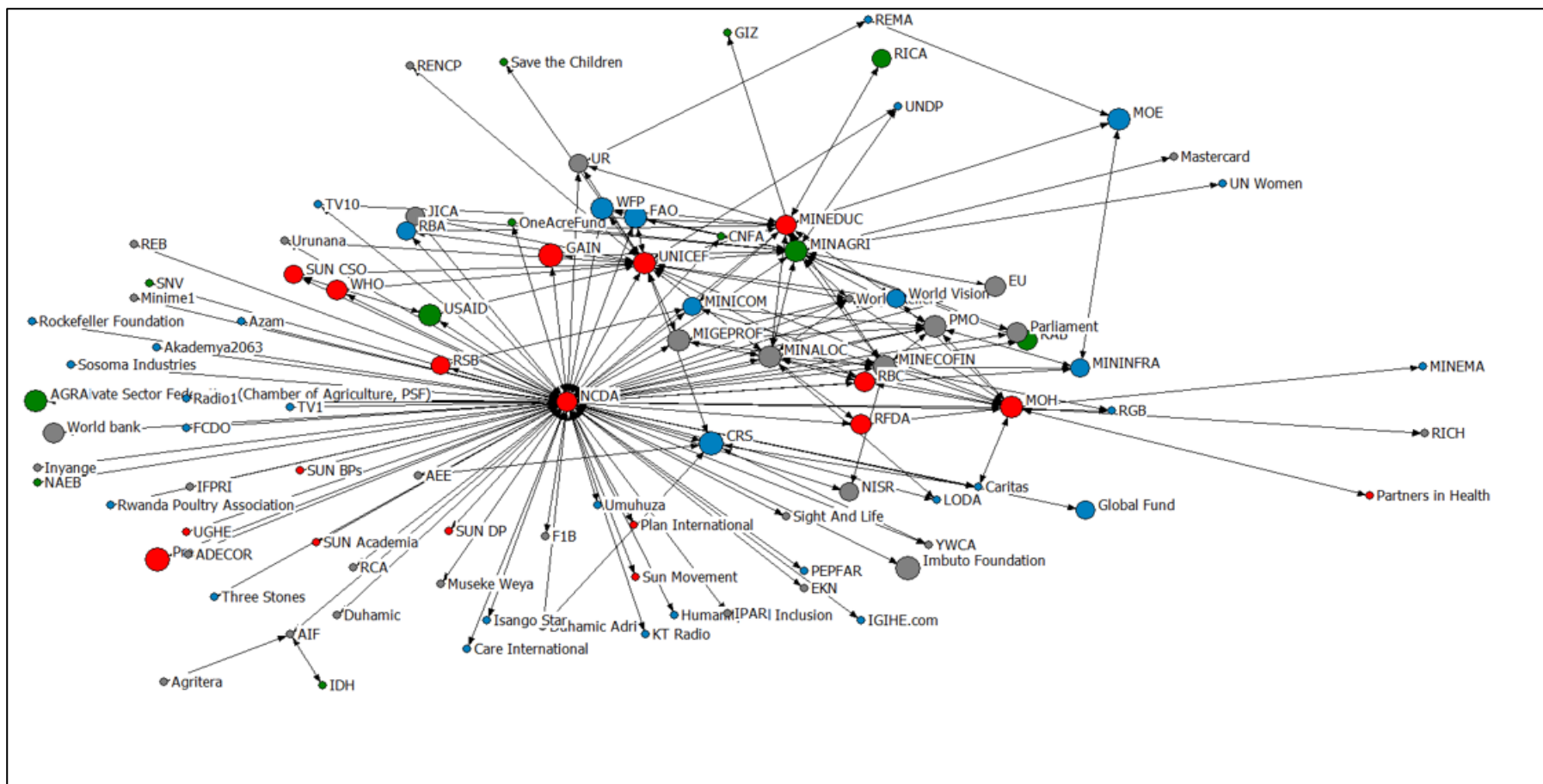


Figure 7. Coordination links among stakeholders⁴

⁴ Key: The colours show four different actor priorities (Green: Agriculture productivity; Red: Nutrition; Blue: Food security; Grey: Multiple).

The net-map shows representation of private sector entities, NGOs, development partners, and UN agencies who collaborate and significantly contribute to Rwanda's nutrition and food system. Furthermore, various inter-ministerial TWG groups such as the Social and Agriculture clusters play a role in fostering collaboration among government, donors, and NGOs to address one critical issue such as nutrition, agriculture, and food security issues. However, these are often working on one area of the food system only.

Interviewees note that collaboration and coordination remain a gap among actors. Even though NCDA has the nutrition mandate and coordinates with a range of stakeholders, many interviewees did not know about it. They highlighted instead that coordination is fragmented, and agencies often work in silos without being aware of what other entities are doing.

“There's not really any coordination mechanism to allow education, agriculture, trade and industry, and NCDA to share their findings or to coordinate and say, hey, what are you doing here? We are doing this. So, you will see a lot of duplication. And this is also because of the donor landscape as well.” (Stakeholder category 3)

“Coordination is still needed so we know what all those other people are doing, whom are they approaching, or identify gaps so that we know who and when we can intervene” (Stakeholder category 4)

“What I can see is that the coordination is concentrated in one place where some of the actors can't be linked to this coordination; depending on what I answered, you can see that SOSOMA has association with RBA, URUNANA, and others – you can't see links in coordination with the others above. So, coordination needs to be strengthened where all of these actors can have inputs to deliver, that's the first one” (Stakeholder category 5)

Influential stakeholders based on district data

At the district level, JADF is a multi-stakeholder platform comprised of representatives from the public and private sectors and civil society. It was established to enhance citizen participation in decentralized governance and to improve service provision processes. RGB is mandated to coordinate and manage JADF's activities.

Furthermore, local initiatives such as the District Plan for the Elimination of Malnutrition (DPEM) exist, which are implemented by the Health and Social Protection Units and supported by frameworks such as the District Development Strategies and Sectoral Strategic Plans that aim to facilitate the implementation of decentralized national policies. While plans are in place, their implementation has been constrained by budget limitations and a lack of coordination.

“As I mentioned earlier, coordination is what is lacking because they have established DPEM (District Plan for Eliminating Malnutrition) in every district, but they are lacking budget. When you talk to them, they even say that they do not have funds to set up a meeting. It was well designed because they work from the sector level to the district level, but they do not even go into implementation by allocating poor families and having a plan to eradicate the issue. Then, the NGOs with resources could align with the implementation plan from DPEM” (Stakeholder category 2).

District level data reveals the involvement of numerous actors in nutrition and food systems across the five provinces. There are 21 key stakeholders recognized for their influence nationally and at district level. An overview of these stakeholders is presented in Table 9. Of these, 13 actors work in the Southern Province, eight in the Eastern and

Western Province and seven and three in the Northern and Kigali province, respectively. Their key areas of work include agriculture (n=11) followed by nutrition (n=8). Many of these actors work in multiple districts across the five provinces and thus a total of 61 local offices/initiatives that belong to these 21 stakeholders were considered influential by JDAFs. Most of these were smaller offices that included less than 5 (n=22) or between 5-10 staff members (n=18). JDAFs perceived almost half of the local offices (n=30) as having strong technical resources. The majority of actors were recognized as being very much aligned (n=33) or more or less aligned (n=24) with national policies. JDAF's also considered almost all organizations supportive in aligning with the decision-making around food systems and nutrition (n=51).

Table 9. Influential stakeholders at district level, by province

Stakeholder name	Provinces of work	Area of work
AEE Rwanda	East, West, Kigali	Agriculture, Entrepreneurship
AGRITERRA	East, North, South	Agriculture, Environment, Nutrition
Care	South, North	Entrepreneurship, Nutrition
Caritas	East, West, South, North	Agriculture, Entrepreneurship, Health, Nutrition
Duhamic Adri	East, North, South	Agriculture
FXB Rwanda	South	Health
Garden for health	Kigali	Agriculture
Humanity and inclusion	South, North	Health
Imbuto Foundation	Kigali	Nutrition
Inyange Industry	East	Agriculture
One Acre Fund	East, West, South, North	Agriculture, Environment
Plan International	East, South	Agriculture, Health
RICH	South	Nutrition
Sight and life	East, West	Agriculture; Nutrition
SNV	West	Agriculture
Swiss TPH	West	Health, Nutrition
Umuhuza Organization	South	Health
Urugaga Imbaraga	West, South	Agriculture
World Relief	South	Entrepreneurship
World Vision	West, North, South	Entrepreneurship, Nutrition
YWCA	South	Entrepreneurship, Health

Interplay between district and national levels

A further finding of this mapping exercise is that although Rwanda has a central coordination structure between the national government and district level actors, its implementation appears inconsistent, leading to varying levels of effectiveness across districts. All those providing data explained clearly how central ministries such as MINAGRI, MINISANTE, and MINALOC play key roles in setting directives, which are then cascaded down through national agencies such as NCDA, RGB, and RBC to ensure

compliance at the district level. Respondents also referred to their role in overseeing structures and programmes such as DPEM and Shishakibondo distribution. However, the district data reveals that inconsistencies persist, with some districts lacking structured coordination mechanisms between central and district levels, and others having limited information on the process. Fewer stakeholders indicate that coordination mechanisms are working. Despite the existence of a top-down framework, its effectiveness appears to vary widely by district.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the findings indicate that a substantial number of different actors are involved in the food system and nutrition sectors in Rwanda and that respondents recognize a variety of them as being influential. Interviewees allocated the most power to bodies that hold formal authority, such as government agencies (the President, PMO, MINECOFIN, MINAGRI, MINALOC, MOH, NCDA), UN agencies (UNICEF and WFP) that provide both technical and financial support, and USAID, which at the time of the research was perceived as the most influential donor. The bodies with the highest number of connections, according to the interviewees, are NCDA, MINAGRI, MINECOFIN, and the PMO, which are also perceived as the most influential ones. NCDA is considered particularly relevant as a coordination body, while MINECOFIN oversees and allocates the national budget.

The range of stakeholders engaged in the food system is in line with the datasets received from RDB and RCA that highlight more than 9,000 private companies and almost 3,000 cooperatives being registered across the country. Furthermore, many different actors at the district level engage in the agriculture and nutrition sectors seeking to improve nutritional outcomes and enhance the food system in Rwanda.

Based on the SWOT analysis conducted (see Annex 2), strengths, gaps/weaknesses and opportunities within the network are presented below.

Strengths in the stakeholder network

The results of this mapping indicate that there is strong national commitment and political will to reduce malnutrition, reflected by policies championed by leaders like the President and PMO, which need to be further leveraged. The recently launched PSTA5 and National Strategy for Transformation (2024-2029) both include nutrition and agricultural priorities and underscore the government's commitment. The governance of food systems and nutrition is primarily driven by centralized authority and focused presidential oversight, ensuring a unified vision and strategic alignment with national priorities.

Substantial human, technical, and financial resources already exist within the network, and significant investments are sustained by the government, development partners, NGOs, UN agencies, and the private sector. While some provide funding support, other entities ensure frequent knowledge exchange and provide technical advice among each other. This ensures interconnections and specialized technical collaborations, enabling targeted nutrition interventions and leveraging expertise. If the existing investments were coordinated efficiently, the efforts are likely having a significant and sustainable impact in reducing malnutrition in Rwanda.

Likewise, mechanisms and structures are already in place, which can be built upon. For example, at national level a Multi-sectoral Nutrition and Stunting Steering Committee that plays a vital role in planning and evaluating efforts to reduce malnutrition nationwide. This committee, which includes the PMO and representatives from sectors such as health,

nutrition, agriculture, and social protection, can be further utilized to enhance coordination and collaboration across sectors. Similarly, Food and Nutrition TWGs are in place but need to be further strengthened. At district level, JADF, District Planning Meetings and District Plans for Eliminating Malnutrition (DPEMs) exist to facilitate structured collaboration among stakeholders but lack resources and strong coordination. Rwanda can leverage and build upon these existing structures and investments to create sustainable improvements.

Gaps in the stakeholder network

Despite the presence and engagement of various actors, there remains a gap in coordination and collaboration across different sectors, such as agriculture, health, and nutrition. Interviewees highlight the lack of a clear mechanism for consistent interaction and shared decision-making across sectors. Most ministries, development partners, and NGOs work in isolation, solely focusing on advancing one agenda. For example, a UN agency may provide funding to an NGO to support school meal programmes without considering how they could enhance other components of the food system, such as production or waste management. Certain steps in the food system were not covered by any interviewed organization, such as distribution, water, sanitation, and hygiene or waste management. There also seemed to be little consensus on the concept of 'food systems' and what it entails among interviewees.

While NCDA owns the nutrition mandate and leads stakeholder coordination, many stakeholders in the network do not recognize the agency's coordination efforts. Likewise, as they are an entity under MIGEPROF, they may not yet have the formal authority over other bodies to effectively convene and coordinate multisectoral actors and activities. Although NCDA serves as the key coordinator, it is evident from the results that the agency receives limited funding and technical advice. According to the interviewees, MINECOFIN is playing a key role in distribution of funds, while MINAGRI is the body receiving the most technical and policy advice. However, for NCDA to coordinate effectively, they will require increased funds and other resources in the future. NCDA themselves highlights their lack of funds, human resources, and technical capacity to successfully advance the nutrition and food systems agenda.

Figure 7 illustrates the strong interconnectedness between government entities, donors, and UN organizations, which promotes collaboration and resource sharing. While this connectivity has benefits, the complexity of such a dense network can lead to challenges, including difficulties in coordination and overlapping responsibilities, which may reduce efficiency and the effective use of resources. Conversely, reliance on one central body, like NCDA, poses the risk of bottlenecks in case this entity becomes overburdened, or resources are withdrawn, which can disrupt the overall system.

According to interviewees, there is a gap in data availability. Most interventions rely on the DHS, which was conducted every five years in the past, and/or the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis. However, timely data to understand trends, review progress made in between the five years, or course correct interventions is limited. This is evident from the limited engagement of academia and research institutions, as highlighted in the net-maps. Additionally, the DHS is no longer funded by USAID. Some interviewees pointed out that despite ongoing nutrition-related research, effective dissemination is lacking. This gap could be bridged through stronger partnerships and more effective collaboration efforts.

As shown in the net-map with funding links as perceived by interviewees, there was a lack of NGOs that receive and give out funding that prioritises nutrition. Funding activities are largely concentrated around NGOs seeking to improve agriculture, food security, or actors with multiple priorities. This could be due to the recent government focus on food security.

Opportunities in the stakeholder network

Interviewees perceive NCDA as a key player in this network with not only the mandate to act but also the connections and influence. Their role and position could be strategically strengthened and leveraged to enhance collaborations and partnerships. For example, NCDA could partner closely with a government entity that holds formal authority, such as the PMO, which has the convening power to bring entities together. Considering that MIGEPROF has formal oversight of NCDA, MIGEPROF's engagement and support to NCDA could be enhanced, to increase their capacity to mobilize resources and bring stakeholders together. MINAGRI, NCDA, and MINECOFIN, as the three most influential entities, could strengthen their collaboration and partnership to drive the process.

There is strong national commitment and political will to reduce malnutrition, reflected in policies championed by leaders like the President and PMO. For example, MINAGRI's newly published PSTA5, which integrates nutrition for the first time, could serve as a key roadmap for all partners engaged in the food system, as it offers a robust foundation for action and monitoring. The framework could be an opportunity to better implement and coordinate activities among partners to maximize impact.

Given that substantial funding and technical resources exist, the primary challenge lies in coordinating these resources effectively to optimize their impact. A holistic multi-sectoral coordination structure would provide an opportunity for enhanced coordination, collaboration, and transparency about what partners are doing. It would also help to identify ongoing initiatives and forge new partnerships. To monitor implementation progress against activities, the **PSTA's** Monitoring and Evaluation System, which includes a Strategic Results Framework and Operational Framework, could be used. It may also help each sector and district to develop their own strategic plans, understand gaps they have, and what support would be needed to improve. Developing a clear and efficient TWG in each sector with fixed terms of references may help to act on the strategic plans.

At district level, existing structures, platforms, and mechanisms – such as JADF or similar platforms – could be leveraged more holistically to enact the policies and enhance coordination as envisioned in PSTA5. As mentioned by JADF, many districts did not have a local coordination structure, potentially due to lack of awareness or resources. Concurrently, capacity of local actors needs to be fostered to ensure they have the technical knowledge to execute the policies. This would also decrease their dependency on external agencies, which are proliferated in the network.

Inclusion of peripheral NGOs and government entities currently outside the core network would enhance collaboration and bring stakeholders closer together. For example, research institutions, such as the University of Rwanda and the Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture, could be engaged more and their expertise leveraged to improve data availability and enhance evidence-based practices. Both organizations are recognized as influential stakeholders, despite their limited connections. Similarly, harnessing partnerships with the private sector could enhance innovation, sustainability, and better coordination with NGOs and CSOs, such as World Vision, AGRA, and SUN CSO, which are all influential, could help to create synergies and improve alignment.

Limitations

Some limitations to this mapping need to be noted. Firstly, it was planned to interview 21 stakeholders at national level, but only 17 interviews could be completed in the agreed time period given high workloads and competing demands on senior officials' time. More interviews could have provided a more holistic network, though interviews were completed with at least one stakeholder per category. Secondly, given that interviewees knew the study was conducted on behalf of GAIN and MINAGRI, social desirability bias may have occurred and led them to report on GAIN's and MINAGRI's activities in a favourable way. This limitation was mitigated as far as possible by assuring interviewees that the data was to be stored and analysed anonymously. Third, the net-mapping process was subjective, and participants answered the questions to the best of their knowledge and based on their perceptions. This may have led to recall bias or misclassifications in determining links and relationships. Likewise, some important stakeholders or links may have been missed due to limited knowledge. Lastly, due to scheduling conflicts with RGB, their stakeholder list only became available when the data collection phase was highly advanced, meaning not all their stakeholders could be incorporated.

RECOMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the net-mapping process, the stakeholder interviews at national and district level, and the policy review, several recommendations have been developed with the goal to improve nutrition and food systems in Rwanda:

Strengthen partnerships: Foster more partnerships with universities, NGOs, development partners, and other organizations that are perceived as influential stakeholders in nutrition and food systems but have been less visible so far.

Engage peripheral actors: Actively integrate stakeholders like MINEMA, and Partners in Health by identifying their potential contributions within the network and encouraging active participation in joint initiatives, workshops, and policy dialogue.

Enhance NCDA's convening power: Ensure that NCDA has formal authority as the key coordination body to convene meetings with other stakeholders. This could be done through closer collaboration with MIGEPROF that holds authority over NCDA.

Empower decentralized authorities: Ministries like MINALOC and MIGEPROF, which promote localized governance and family-centred strategies, should be further empowered to ensure effective policy implementation at sub-national levels, particularly by increasing their capacity to oversee and support affiliated agencies and NGOs.

Mobilize resources: Continue to mobilize resources and diversify funding sources, e.g., through partnerships with new development partners, NGOs, and explore opportunities to collaborate with the private sector.

Strengthen research activities: Strengthen engagement with research institutions to increase data availability and ensure that high quality technical and policy advice is leveraged and shared effectively within the network.

Strengthen NCDA's coordination role: Formalize NCDA's coordination structure and mechanisms, including regular inter-agency meetings, stakeholder consultations, and communication protocols to ensure inclusivity and consistent and regular collaboration.

Assess coordination gaps in each sector: Conduct targeted assessments in each sector to identify existing coordination gaps and develop strategic plans and strategies to address them.

Increase awareness about policies: Strengthen partners' awareness about existing nutrition and food system policies and their objectives to ensure actors are aware of the overall picture, and how they are contributing. For example, for decision-makers in agriculture and food production to also consider the importance of nutrition. Cascade this increased knowledge and awareness to entities at the district level and leverage existing structures like DPEM.

Build awareness among the community: Collaborate with partners to further raise awareness about a food systems approach and healthy nutrition at community level. This can be done through different avenues, including the media and involvement of influential leaders.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this mapping highlight the complexities, gaps, and opportunities related to stakeholders engaged in nutrition and food systems in Rwanda. There is significant political will and strong leadership from central actors, such as MINAGRI, NCDA, and the PMO, that can be further leveraged to help address malnutrition. The findings highlight a significant number of actors involved in the food system, including the private sector, that could benefit from more structured coordination and clarity of roles and responsibilities in order to be effective. It will be important to strengthen a multi-sectoral coordination mechanism to foster partnerships across sectors and better leverage existing resources. A unified action plan, supported by effective monitoring mechanisms, would provide the necessary structure to align efforts and optimize resources. Investments in robust data systems, local capacity-building, and innovative collaborations with private and civil society actors will further enhance sustainability and impact. With these advancements, Rwanda is well positioned to progress toward its ambitious nutrition goals, contributing to healthier and more resilient communities, with better nourished and highly performing school students, a productive future workforce, and a new generation of food system champions.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. FULL LIST OF ACTORS AND THEIR ACRONYMS

Actors	Full name (if acronym used)
ADECOR	Association of Consumer Rights Protection
ADRA	The Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AEE	African Enterprise Rwanda
AFDB	African Development Bank
African Union/CAADP	African Union/ The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme
AGRA	Sustainably Growing Africa's Food System
AGRITERRA	Agri-agency for cooperative development in new and emerging economies
AIF	Africa Improved Foods
AKADEMIYA2063	AKADEMIYA2063
ASWG	Agriculture Sector Working Group
Azam	Bakhresa Grain Milling (Rwanda) Ltd
Care International	Care International
Caritas	Caritas
CHAI	Clinton Health Access Initiative
CNFA	Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
Duhamic	DUHaranira AMajyambere y'ICyaro
Duhamic Adri	DUHaranira AMajyambere y'ICyaro
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
EU	European Union
Exim Bank	Export-Import Bank
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
Farm Fresh	Farm Fresh
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FXB	Association François-Xavier Bagnoud
GAPU	Gabiro Agribusiness Processing Unit
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
Garden for health	Garden for health
GFF	Global Financing Facility
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
GFATM	Global Fund
H&I	Humanity and Inclusion
IDH	The sustainable Trade Initiative
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGIHE.com	IGIHE Ltd.
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
Imbuto Foundation	Imbuto Foundation
Inyange	Inyange Industries

IPAR	Institute of Policy Analysis and Research
Isango Star	Isango Star, 91.5 MHz FM
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
Kivu Choice	Kivu Choice (Fish)
Koica	Korean International Cooperation Agency
KT Radio	KT Radio
Land O' Lakes	Land-O'Lakes
LODA	Local Administrative Entities Development Agency
Mama Urwagasabo	Mama Urwagasabo TV
Mastercard Foundation	Mastercard Foundation
Medical college	Medical college
MIFOTRA	Ministry of Public Service and Labour
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINEMA	Ministry in charge of Emergency Management
MINICOM	Ministry of Trade and Commerce
Minimex	Minimex Ltd.
MININFRA	Ministry of Infrastructure
Miniyouth	Ministry of Youth and Arts
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MOFA	Dutch Ministry of foreign Affairs
MOH	Ministry of Health
Mukamira	Mukamira
Museke Weya	Museke Weya
NAEB	National Agricultural Export Development Board
NCDA	National Child Development Agency
NESA	National Examination and School Inspection Authority
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NSWG	Nutrition Sector Working Group
OneAcreFund	OneAcreFund
Parliament	Parliament of Rwanda
Partners in Health	Partners in Health
PEPFAR	U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
Plan International	Plan International
PMO	Prime Minister Office
President	President of Rwanda
PSF	Private Sector Federation (Chamber of Agriculture)
RAB	Rwanda Agriculture Board
Radio FM	Radio Rwanda
Radio1	Radio1 Rwanda

Ralga	Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities
RBA	Rwanda Broadcasting Agency
RBC	Rwanda Biomedical Centre
RCA	Rwanda Cooperative Agency
RDF Police	Rwanda Defence Force Police
REB	Rwanda Basic Education Board
REMA	Rwanda Environment Management Authority
RENCP	Rwanda Education NGO Coordination Platform
RFDA	Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
RICA	Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture
RICA (MINAGRI)	Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture
RICH	Rwanda Interfaith Council on Health
RMS	Rwanda Medical Supply
Rockefeller Foundation	Rockefeller Foundation
RSB	Rwanda Standards Board
RTB	Rwanda TVET Board
RPA	Rwanda Poultry Association
Savannah	Savannah
Save the Children	Save the Children
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SAL	Sight and Life
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization (Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers)
Sosoma Industries	Sosoma Industries Ltd.
Swiss TPH	Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute
SUN Academia	Scaling Up Nutrition Academia
SUN BPs	Scaling Up Nutrition Business Partners
SUN CSO	Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Organization
SUN DP	Scaling Up Nutrition Development Partners
Sun Movement	Scaling Up Nutrition Movement
SUN UN	Scaling Up Nutrition United Nations Platform
TBI	Tony Blair Institute
Three Stones	Three Stones
TV1	Television Channel 1
TV10	Television Channel 10
UGHE	University of Global Health Equity
Umuhuza	Umuhuza Organization
UN Women	United Nations Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UR	University of Rwanda
Urugaga Imbaraga	Urugaga Imbaraga

Urunana	Urunana Development Communication
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASAC	Water And Sanitation Corporation
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
World Relief	World Relief
World Vision	World Vision
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

ANNEX 2. DETAILED SWOT ANALYSIS

Theme	Strength	Weakness/Gap	Opportunity	Threat	Proposed Mitigation strategies
Formal authority	1. Centralized Leadership and strong national commitment to Nutrition and food system Governance: The governance of food security and nutrition is driven by centralized authority and focused presidential oversight, ensuring a unified vision and strategic alignment with national priorities. The Office of the President underscores high-level commitment to nutrition, while key actors like the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and MINECOFIN provide leadership and resource allocation to support broader development goals. 2. A cohesive network and well-defined hierarchy among key actors facilitate decentralized implementation and specialized expertise: The governance of food systems and nutrition relies on a well-structured network that promotes coordination among ministries, agencies, and diverse stakeholders. With a clear hierarchy, ministries such as MINAGRI	1. Complex Network: The dense network and multiple layers of authority often lead to delays in decision-making, inefficiencies, and potential overlaps in responsibilities. 2. Dependence on Centralized Structures: Over-reliance on central actors (e.g., PMO, President's Office) often hinder grassroots-level innovation and flexibility in addressing localized challenges.	1. The government's overall formal authority offers a critical opportunity to enhance the sustainability of nutrition and food system initiatives. With the development of a unified action plan, a clear strategic vision, and a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, the government can effectively guide donor interventions to align with national priorities. This strong political will and centralized governance enable the efficient allocation of resources and the implementation of targeted, impactful, and sustainable solutions. 2. Opportunity to leverage existing governance structures to higher formal authority to efficiently facilitate interventions around nutrition and food system: The strong political will and established leadership at the national level, such as the Prime Minister's Office and NCDA, offer a foundation to enhance coordination and	1. Vulnerability to political shifts that can potentially impede policy continuity: The formal authority held by government actors makes the governance system vulnerable to political shifts, as changes in leadership or priorities can disrupt long-term strategies and create inconsistencies in addressing food system and nutrition goals. 2. Potential friction with donors due to misaligned priorities: While the government's authority enables it to dictate national priorities, this can lead to misalignments with donor agendas due to differing objectives and timelines. This lack of alignment, combined with reliance on external funding risks reducing resource effectiveness and jeopardizing critical programmes dependent on donor support. 3. Challenges in responding to localized or emergent needs: The centralization of	1. To address complex networks, there is a need to streamline decision-making by delegating authority to regional or local levels for improved efficiency and reduced delays. Additionally, enhancing inter-ministerial coordination by leveraging existing well-established task forces or working groups to align goals, clarify roles, and ensure accountability across agencies and ministries. 2. To reduce dependence on centralized structures, there is a need to promote decentralization by empowering local actors with resources, authority, and technical capacity to address localized challenges. Additionally, there is a need to strengthen community engagement through

	and MOH oversee specialized agencies to enable decentralized implementation and targeted expertise, while integrating government bodies, private sector actors, and NGOs in a multi-sectoral approach. This interconnected system ensures collaboration, accountability, and alignment of efforts through clearly defined pathways of influence and dependencies.		accountability across ministries. Elevating institutions such as NCDA to higher authority levels could further bolster inter-ministerial collaboration and decision-making. 3. There is an opportunity to leverage on multi-Sectoral collaboration with the involvement of private-sector entities (e.g., PSF) and international organizations (e.g., WFP) to harness additional resources, innovation, and expertise. Government hold the formal authority which suggest a potential avenue for sustainability once a joint plan, a clear vision, and robust monitoring and evaluation system are in place, it is easy to share with donors what to do and where to intervene. Strong political will.	decision-making authority often results in a top-down approach that lacks adaptability to localized challenges or emerging crises. This rigidity, coupled with delays in addressing emergent crises like natural disasters, can hinder timely responses, leaving vulnerable communities unsupported.	participatory planning processes to incorporate local perspectives into national strategies. 3. To ensure policy continuity amid political shifts, institutionalize governance frameworks by embedding food system and nutrition priorities into long-term policies and legislation. Establish non-partisan oversight bodies to monitor policy implementation and maintain focus regardless of leadership transitions.
Funding	1. There is streamlined funding and collaborative support for Food and Nutrition Initiatives: Supported by diverse funding sources from major donors such as USAID, the World Bank, and UN agencies. MINECOFIN ensures streamlined budgeting and coordinated resource distribution across	1. Imbalance in fund allocation: NGOs focused solely on nutrition or agriculture tend to receive less funding, potentially leaving critical areas underfunded. 2. Overreliance on external donors: Heavy reliance on donors	1. Strong political will, national commitment to advancing nutrition initiatives, and well-structured institutions build trust among donors thus creating an opportunity for the country to enhance targeted funding and address under-supported	1. Susceptibility to the funding framework due to potential shifts of donor priorities: Changes in donor agendas or reductions in funding from major contributors such as the World Bank could disrupt ongoing projects. 2. Fragmentation of efforts due to direct funding to	1. To address imbalances in fund allocation and reduce overreliance on external funding, it is essential to develop a balanced funding framework that engages donors to prioritize underfunded areas, such as nutrition. Additionally,

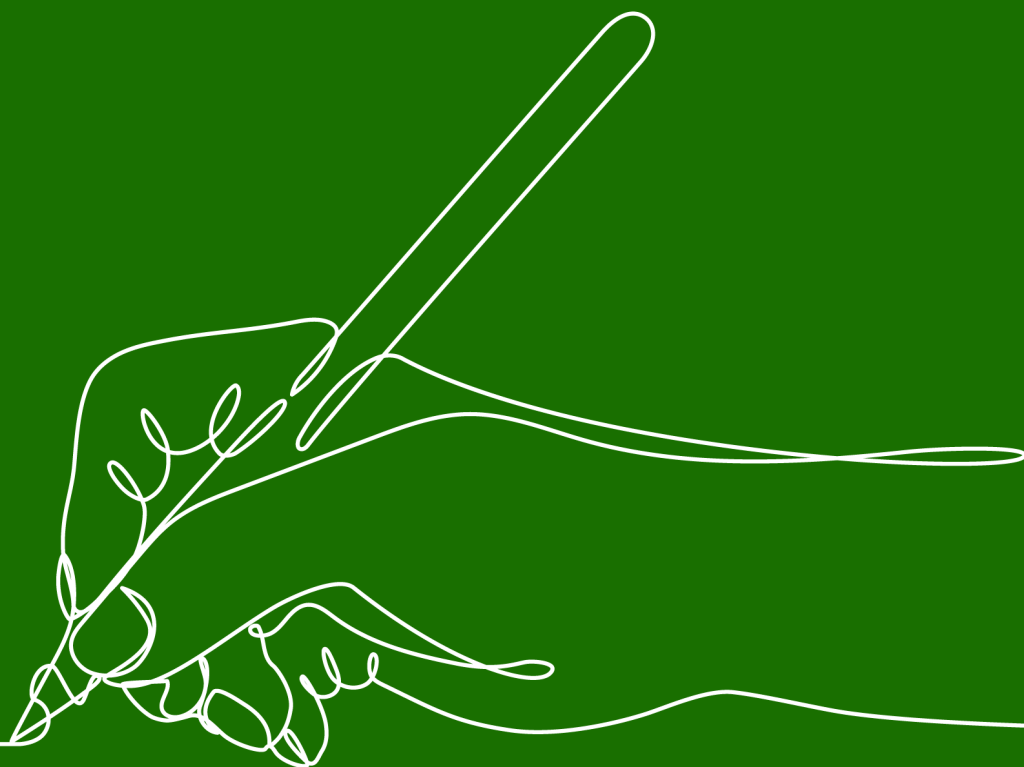
	ministries. Additionally, direct funding channels from these donors to ministries and NGOs enable targeted interventions, while broad stakeholder involvement encourages comprehensive and inclusive projects addressing interconnected challenges.	such as the World Bank for key activities creates vulnerabilities, particularly if funding priorities or levels shift. 3. Potential for inefficiencies: The centralized allocation process through MINECOFIN may lead to delays or mismatched / competing priorities if coordination across ministries and stakeholders is insufficient.	areas within the food system. 2. For sustainability purposes, there is an opportunity to leverage local existing initiatives such as the AGACIRO Development fund for domestic funding to ensure sustainable financing for long-term initiatives in nutrition and the food system. 3. Existing inter-ministerial coordination presents an opportunity to efficiently maximize resource utilization, ensuring prioritization as well as alignment of efforts with national priorities.	various NGOs and ministries without a unified strategy risks duplication of efforts or resource misallocation. 3. Overdependence on multi-priority projects might lessen the impact on specific critical areas such as targeted interventions on nutrition or agriculture.	leveraging local initiatives such as the AGACIRO Development Fund can help secure consistent domestic resources for sustainable, long-term implementation of nutrition and food system initiatives. Expanding domestic revenue streams through public-private partnerships, taxation mechanisms, and investments in national development funds can further reduce dependency on external contributions and enhance financial sustainability. 2. To enhance coordination and prevent inefficiencies, implement unified funding strategies through a national framework to align donor funds with national priorities and avoid duplication. 3. Strengthen inter-ministerial coordination using mechanisms such as existing task forces to streamline resource
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					allocation. To build resilience against donor priority shifts, institutionalize long-term policies for nutrition and food systems in national legislation and establish buffer funds and contingency plans to mitigate funding shortfalls.
Technical Advice	1.High connectivity and central role of MINAGRI: MINAGRI which has a mandate to drive the food system agenda stands out as the most connected entity, receiving substantial technical and policy advice, enabling it to play a central role in food system strategies. 2. Key government entities, including MINECOFIN, MOH, MINICOM, MINEDUC, and MIGEPROF, receive substantial technical support, fostering multi-sectoral collaboration and aligning resources with broader development goals through a well-established policy and implementation networks. 3. Priority-based clustering, such as the nutrition-focused cluster around NCDA and MOH, fosters	1. Sectoral Silos: While priority-based clustering enhances specialization, it may also lead to siloed efforts, reducing cross-sectoral synergy and hindering a holistic approaches to improving nutrition in food systems. 2. Disconnected peripheral stakeholders, including NGOs and ministries such as MOE, are less integrated into the network, limiting their contributions and potentially fragmenting efforts, particularly on crosscutting issues such as the role of education in nutrition. 3. The centrality of entities such as MINAGRI, NCDA, and MOH, while advantageous, may lead to over-reliance on their capacity to manage and coordinate technical	1. Existing international collaborations present an opportunity to align technical advice with global best practices and secure additional resources through stronger engagement with donors and UN agencies to advance the food system and nutrition agenda. 2. Integrating less-connected actors such as MOE and into the central network and involving them in technical working groups can promote inclusive policy discussions and enhance cross-sectoral solutions. 3. There exists an opportunity for knowledge transfer from the available global experts through capacity building sessions to reduce over reliance on donors and ensure a	1. Dependence on external technical advice: The heavy dependence on international donors and UN agencies for technical advice creates risks if their priorities shift or support decreases. The lack of domestic expertise undermines the long-term sustainability of advisory on technical and policy efforts. 2. Capacity overstretch: Entities such as MINAGRI and NCDA, given their central roles, may face capacity constraints, affecting their ability to effectively coordinate and utilize technical advice across sectors.	1. Enhance capacity development and knowledge transfer initiatives at both national and decentralized level, such as training programmes for government personnel and investing in digital tools and centralized data systems, can enhance in-house expertise, streamline technical advice, and reduce reliance on external consultants. 2. Strengthen Capacity and decentralization: Build capacity in less-centralized entities and local stakeholders to reduce bottlenecks and support district-level adaptation of technical advice.

	strong interconnections and specialized technical collaborations, enabling targeted nutrition interventions and leveraging expertise from centralized actors and technical donors. 4. Direct access to global technical and policy expertise: Donors such as EU and JICA, alongside UN agencies such as FAO, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, provide critical technical advice to both government entities and NGOs. This support strengthens policymaking and the capacity of implementing organizations.	advice, risking bottlenecks, exposing resource, and capacity limitations that could hinder their ability to maximize the benefits of technical support.	continuous flow of technical and policy advise.		3. Develop unified technical advisory framework: Establish a centralized framework to streamline technical advice and effectively coordinate silos and align stakeholder efforts. 4. Promote sustainable technical expertise: Foster domestic technical expertise through partnerships with academic institutions and reduce reliance on external donors by enhancing local capacity and ensuring long-term sustainability.
Coordination	1. Strong National Commitment and Political Will: The coordination framework benefits from a favourable political environment and high-level commitment, particularly through the Prime Minister's Office and NCDA, which have demonstrated influence and capacity for collaboration. 2. Established coordination platforms: Mechanisms such as the Food and Nutrition Technical Working Group, District Planning Meetings,	4. Coordination gaps between ministries and agencies: Despite clear lines of authority, there might be challenges in inter-ministerial collaboration, especially for crosscutting issues (e.g., integrating health, nutrition, agriculture, and financial policies).	1. Leveraging existing structures such as Technical Working Groups at the national level, and JADF, and DPEM at the decentralized level to ensure efficient coordination among key actors in the ecosystem. 2. Expanding partnerships: Collaborating with private-sector partners, religious institutions, and other stakeholders can drive innovation and expand the network's reach.	1. Fragmentation of risks: Peripheral organizations, such as MINEMA and MOE, play a critical role in the food system but remain disconnected from the coordination framework, potentially resulting in fragmented efforts and diminishing the overall impact of the network's initiatives. 2. The lack of clear role delineation among stakeholders in the food system network risks duplication of efforts and	1. Strengthen NCDA's authority and capacity: Ensure NCDA collaborates with a higher authority, such as the Prime Minister's Office, to ensure effective enforcement of coordination efforts across sectors. 2. Develop unified action plans: Require all stakeholders to present and align their strategies under a single framework, facilitated through the

	and the District Plan for Eliminating Malnutrition (DPEM) facilitate structured collaboration among stakeholders. 3. Multi-sectoral engagement: Diverse actors, including ministries, NGOs, and technical working groups, contribute to addressing food system and nutrition challenges through coordinated efforts.		3. Unified action plans and databases: Developing a centralized database and unified action plans can enhance transparency, reduce duplication, and streamline resource allocation.	inefficient resource allocation and use. For example, while NCDA serves as a central coordinating body, close collaborations around MINAGRI and direct funding to NGOs such as Save the Children may result in overlapping initiatives with ministries such as MOH or MINECOFIN. 3. Dependence on key ministries: Heavy reliance on MINAGRI for coordinating Food System Initiatives could limit focus on other critical sectors such as education, health, and social protection, which are essential for comprehensive nutrition strategies. 4. Dependency on donor-driven agendas: Coordination efforts are often influenced by donor-specific priorities, leading to fragmented initiatives and misalignment with national strategies. 5. Limited awareness and understanding: A lack of consensus on the food systems approach among stakeholders hampers unified coordination and implementation. 6. Inadequate monitoring	Food and Nutrition Technical Working Group. 3. Enhance decentralization: Empower district-level platforms like DPEM with adequate funding, personnel, and monitoring tools to address grassroots challenges effectively. 4. Engage peripheral actors: Integrate disconnected stakeholders, such as MOE and Save the Children, into central coordination efforts to leverage their expertise and resources. 5. Improve data systems: Create a centralized database to track interventions, monitor progress, and enhance decision-making based on evidence. 6. Expand multi-sectoral partnerships: Actively involve private-sector entities, media, and civil society organizations to foster innovation and
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				and accountability: Weak reporting systems and insufficient accountability mechanisms can hinder progress tracking and evaluation.	broaden the network's impact. 7. Institutionalize monitoring mechanisms: Establish robust accountability systems to regularly assess progress, address gaps, and ensure alignment with national goals.
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ABOUT GAIN

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is a Swiss-based foundation launched at the UN in 2002 to tackle the human suffering caused by malnutrition. Working with governments, businesses and civil society, we aim to transform food systems so that they deliver more nutritious food for all people, especially the most vulnerable.

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