Viet Nam has experienced sustained growth in per-capita GDP and Dietary Energy Supply (DES) in recent years, as well as a sustained decline in undernourishment rates.

Viet Nam reports a sharp declining trend of nutritional outcomes, particularly in underweight and stunting. Anemia represents a persistent issue, particularly among pregnant women and children under 5 years of age.

Exclusive breastfeeding prevalence is low; however, an extension of maternity leave, and ban on advertising of breastmilk substitutes, were recently passed and have the potential to help to increase this practice.

Figure 1.1 Food Availability
From 1990 to 2011:
- DES increased 42%
- Animal-origin supply increased 230%
- Vegetal-origin products increased 23% and remain the major DES source

Figure 1.2 Undernourishment and Economic Growth
From 1990 to 2012:
- GDP increased 227%
- Undernourishment declined 83%

Figure 1.3 Child Malnutrition
From 1993 to 2011:
- Stunting declined 62%
- Underweight declined 67%
- in 2011, Wasting stood at 4%
- Overweight increased to 4%

Figure 1.4 Child Mortality
From 1990 to 2012:
- Under-5 mortality reduced 54% and will not achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target
- Infant mortality reduced 49%
- Neonatal mortality reduced 45%

Figure 1.5 Anaemia
• Anaemia is a public health issue for pregnant women (32%), non-pregnant women (24%) and under-5 children alike (34%); it is a severe issue among under-2 children (52%)

Anthropometry (Table 1.1)
Underweight women (BMI < 18.5 kg/m2) 18.5 % 2010
Overweight adults (BMI >= 25 kg/m2) 5.6 % 2010

Proportion of infants with low birth weight 5 % 2010-2011
Although cereals remain the most important source of food energy, their contribution declined from 70% in 1990 to 57% in 2011.
While animal fats doubled their availability (229%) and meat and milk increased by 242%.

During the global food crisis in 2008, food prices increased 37% while general prices increased 23%.
In 2011:
• Families generally spent more than 42% of their income on food. While cereals contributed a significant share (39%) of food intake, they only affected 6% of food expenditure at household level
• Meat, milk, and eggs contribute 18% of food intake.

Sources: UN_FAO RAP based on national HIES, ECS, SES, HLSS_2013 Update, Viet Nam
Food Utilization

Food utilization refers both to household preparation practices of foods, which influence nutrient content of consumed foods, and to the absorption of nutrients by the human body after consumption. Nutrient absorption in the gut is strongly influenced by health status, particularly the presence of diarrhoea. Hygienic environmental conditions related to improved water and sanitation are important determinants of health and infection incidence and prevalence. In Viet Nam, water and sanitation conditions have improved during the past 20 years; these improvements have contributed to the reduction in malnutrition among under-5 children shown in Fig 1.3.

Water and Sanitation

**Figure 3.1 Access to Improved Sanitation**
*From 1990 to 2012:*
- Access to improved sanitation increased 101% in 22 years
- Disparities between rural and urban areas continue, although they have decreased to 22%
- 25% of the population does not have access to improved sanitation

**Figure 3.2 Open Defecation**
*From 1990 to 2012:*
- Open defecation decreased 95% in 22 years
- The practice still occurs in 3% of rural households.

**Figure 3.3 Access to Improved Water Sources**
*From 1990 to 2012:*
- Disparities between urban and rural areas in access to improved water sources have been significantly reduced
- At least 95% of the population has sustainable access to improved water

Food Safety

Quality and food safety efforts cover the entire complex chain of agriculture production, processing, transport, food production and consumption. On the production side, food safety challenges exist at farm level and in the processing stage. On the consumption side, the prevalence of diarrhoea among under-5 children is relatively low for all wealth quintiles (Fig 3.4).

**Figure 3.4 Diarrhoea**
- Diarrhoea in young children is most common among the poorest wealth quintiles, reflecting disparities in sanitation as well as in general hygiene and food safety.
- Only 1% of children younger than age 5 receive zinc treatment during episodes of diarrhoea. Chronic diarrhoea in children can lead to stunting, underweight and death.

**Management of Diarrhoea (Table 3.1)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wealth quintile</th>
<th>Percentage of Children Receiving Zinc Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: VNM_MICS 2010-2011*

**Zinc**
- Share of children under 5 with diarrhoea receiving zinc treatment: 1%

**Existing policy framework**
- Zinc Supplementation and Reformulated Oral Rehydration Salt in the Management of Diarrhea

*Source: VNM_MICS 2010-2011*
**Food Utilization**

**Nutrition and Health**

**Figure 3.5 Exclusive Breastfeeding**
- From 1997 to 2011, Exclusive breastfeeding for first six months of age has not changed and about 4 out of 5 of infants are not exclusively breastfed.
- More than half of the newborns are breastfed within the first hour of life.

**Figure 3.6 Complementary Feeding**
- Introduction of complementary feeding (46%) is not timely for most children.
- 87% of children aged 6-23 months meet the minimum meal frequency and 82% meet adequate diversity.
- Two thirds of children (66%) got the minimum acceptable diet.

**Figure 3.7 Duration of Breastfeeding**
- Duration and frequency of breastfeeding affect the health and nutritional status of both mother and child.
- Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended up to age 6 months, and continued breastfeeding with complementary feeding is recommended from age 6 months until 2 years and beyond.

**Figure 3.8 Child Malnutrition and Poverty**
- Stunting, underweight and wasting are more common in the lower wealth quintiles.
- Overweight is more than 4 times more prevalent in the wealthiest quintile than in the poorest.

**Micronutrient Status**

**Figure 3.9 Vitamin A**
- Successful Vitamin A supplementation (98%) is a likely contributor to the observed reductions in child mortality.
- Vitamin A deficiencies (12% of pre-schoolers) indicate that Vitamin A has significantly improved in the daily diet.

**Iodine (Table 3.2)**
- Households consuming iodized salt (2011) = 45%
- Iodine deficiency (Urinary Iodine Concentration <100ug/L) among school-age children = -

*VAD is a severe public health problem if >20% of preschool children (6-71 months) have low serum retinol (<0.7µmol/L).


Source: a/ Viet Nam MICS 2011
Enabling environment for Nutrition and Food security - Policy documents

   Plan aims to address health care disparities and increasing coverage; multi sectorial collaboration and coordination mechanisms need strengthening; progress monitoring not yet integrated in MoH routine monitoring and reporting system.

   Strategy focused on stunting reduction and emerging issues; highlights importance of equity approach and public-private partnerships to address malnutrition; related plan of action with detailed approach for first 1,000 days is under development.

3. Government Decree No: 21/2006/ND-CP on Trading In and Use of Nutritious Products for Infants
   Decree will be updated to reflect stricter rules banning BMS advertisement for children up to 24 months in the new law on advertisement approved in June 2012 and with effect from January 2013

4. Socio-economic plan, Ministry of Planning and Investment 2011-15
   Plan has a sub-component on improving the quality and healthcare and people’s wellbeing which addresses nutrition (Strengthen physical growth and reduce malnutrition and ensure food safety). Includes a nutrition indicator (% of underweight children) in its M&E framework

5. IYCF National Plan of Action 2012-2015
   Developed and approved by MOH in 2013 provided guidelines for IYCF implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition related issues covered in these policies</th>
<th>Covered</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternal and Child Undernutrition</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child undernutrition</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Covers stunting, wasting and underweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Birth Weight</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>NMN/SAM management guidelines (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal undernutrition</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Interim guidelines for integrated management of acute malnutrition for piloting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity and diet related NCDs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child obesity</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>No specific guidelines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult obesity</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diet related NCDs</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Infant and Young Child Nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complementary feeding</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Decree 21 being revised to be in line with law on advertisement and Intl Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>Int'l Code of Marketing of BMS</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vitamins and Minerals</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementation: Vitamin A children/women</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>Vitamin A Supplementation guidelines for children 6-59 mo. and postpartum women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Folate children/women</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>Deworming guidelines (2007) target children aged 24-59 months in 18 disadvantaged provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc children</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Diarrhoea management guidelines include zinc (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vitamins &amp; min child/women</td>
<td>child</td>
<td>A new national guidelines for micro-nutrient deficiencies prevention and control are being developed and will be approved by the MOH.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food fortification</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Voluntary: Salt, Flour; Policy under revision for mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Food safety law last updated in 2010; Food safety agency coordination mechanism in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlying and contextual factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food security</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Emergency nutrition mainstreamed in Disaster Risk Management programmes; Local Ready-to-Use Supplementary-Foods under development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Aid</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>There is a sector policy on elimination of open defecation, as well as policy for universal access to safe drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition and Infection</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Protection policies or legislation including food or nutrition component

1. Party Resolution 15-NQ/T.U on key social policy issues, 2012-2020
   Range of policies aiming at providing basic social security for all, prioritizing disadvantaged, poor and ethnic minorities, ensuring minimum levels in income and basic needs including reduction of malnutrition of US children to lower than 10% by 2020

2. Resolution 80/NQ-CP on sustainable poverty reduction during 2011-2020
   Range of policies focusing on increased income per capita of poor households, including food subsidies (15 kg rice pp/mo), targeting elderly, disabled, women and children in poor districts and remote areas.

   Aims at reaching universal preschool participation of children under 5, particularly disadvantaged, poor and ethnic minority areas.
Vietnam Food Safety and Agricultural Health Action Plan -2011

Plan under the National Strategy on Food Hygiene and safety 2011-2020 and the vision to 2030

Other policies addressing food security

1. Resolution No 63/ NQ-CP on National Food Security - National strategy of food security to 2020 and vision 2030.
   Aims to protect rice land and further step up intensive rice farming and productivity, especially in Mekong and Red river deltas

2. Resolution No.24/2008/NQ-CP On the issuance of Action Plan Resolution on Agriculture and Rural development for the uplifting targets development and modernization of agriculture to ensure food security; considering aspects of human resources, socio-economic infrastructure, environment and culture and disaster risk reduction.

Food safety policies or legislation

1. Viet Nam National Food Safety Law - 2010
   The law specifies tasks along the food chain and management responsibility and coordination mechanisms of related government agencies and sanctioning of violations. Under this law, MoH developed technical standards for food additives, and micronutrient fortification

Demographic Indicators (Table - 5.1) | Year | Economic Indicators (Table - 5.3) | Year
---|---|---|---
Population size (thousands) /a | 88,773 | GDP annual growth rate /c | 5.24 % | 2012
Average annual population growth/a | 1.1 % | GDP per capita (PPP) (constant 2011 international dollars) /c | 4,912 | 2012
Proportion of population urbanised/c | 31.7 % | Gini index /c (100= complete inequality; 0= complete equality) | 35.57 | 2008
Number of children <5 years (thousand)/a | 7,046 | Unemployment rate /c | 2 % | 2012
Education level of mothers of under-fives: None (%)f | 6 | Population below US $ 1.25 (PPP) per day /c (%) | 16.85 | 2008
Life expectancy at birth (Years) /c | Male | Poverty gap ratio /e | 2.3 | 2008
Life expectancy at birth (Years) /c | Female | Richest 20% | 43.41 % | 2008
Agriculture population density (people/ ha of arable land /b) | 5.8 | | | |
Employment in agriculture sector (% of total employment) /c | 47.4 % | | | |
Women employed in agriculture sector (% of total female employment) /c | 49.5 % | | | |
Adolescents (Table - 5.2) | Year | Income share held by households /c | | |
Adolescent birth rate (number of births per 1,000 adolescent girls aged 15-19) /e | 35 | Poorest 20% | 7.42 % | 2008
Adolescent girls aged 15-19 currently married or in union /f | 8.4 % | | | |
Women aged 20-24 who gave birth before age 18 /f (%) | 3 | | | |

Sources:
a/ World Bank, Health Nutrition and Population Statistics Database 2014 Update
b/ TAOSSTAT 2013 Update;
c/ World Bank, World Development Indicators Database, 2014 Update;
d/ UNICEF, State of the World Children 2014 (data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified)
e/ UN Statistics Division, MDG database 2013 Update.
f/ Viet Nam MICS 2011

The information included in this Food Security and Nutrition profile, is backed by recognized, validated and properly published information available until June 2014. Although updated information might be available at national level form different sources, until requirements of quality, validity and proper publication are met, it has not been included in this profile.