



Strategic Plan 2015 - 2017

Introduction

Action Against Hunger Canada is the inter-agency project convener for the SMART Methodology (Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions). This nutrition assessment methodology was specifically designed to provide decision makers with the ability to collect reliable and accurate nutrition and mortality data. Over the past ten years, SMART has grown to be the reference and standard tool amongst organizations and government collecting nutrition assessment data both during emergencies and in developing contexts.

Availability of quality nutrition data is essential in understanding the extent of nutritional needs of a given population, as well as how to best formulate programs to most appropriately address those needs. Data are crucial for nutrition programs particularly during emergencies and when large scale responses are required. The availability of timely and credible nutrition data, presented in accessible ways at national and subnational levels can guide both the response of governments and other actors towards nutrition challenges and the prioritization of national nutrition and health programming. Hence, **valid nutrition data and evidence makes the difference.**

This three year strategy which extends from 2015 to 2017 aims to improve the quality of technical and response capacity of nutrition stakeholders, with a particular focus on East Africa, the Middle East and South Asia and also contributes to Action Against Hunger's International Strategic Plan (ISP) 2016-2020 overarching goals focusing on improved program quality and impact through provision of timely and quality nutrition situation analysis and monitoring.

Our global experience

The global SMART project provides a global technical service for nutrition stakeholders focusing on coordination, emergency survey support and capacity building. While there has been a significant uptake and growing acceptance of SMART as the nutrition assessment methodology of choice, there remains a number of challenges to be addressed in the coming years.

Technical Coordination

SMART is an active member of the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) at the global and country levels. Since June 2013, the project has established a bi-annual global Assessment Working Group (AWG) forum which provides a technical space for nutrition stakeholders to address field challenges, share technical updates, lessons learned and good practices, as well as advancements in related assessment technology and software.

The project convenor function remains relevant and necessary. As the main entity connecting the developers of SMART (Technical Advisory Group) with SMART users (GNC members and Governments around the world), SMART ensures that: all stakeholders are informed of technical improvements and developments to the methodology.

Emergency Survey Support

Over the years SMART has developed a capacity and mechanism to deliver both remote and in-country technical Emergency Survey Support (ESS¹) following rapid-onset emergencies, protracted crises and areas lacking up-to-date nutrition information. Web based technical assistance to surveys is given through the interactive technical forum on the SMART website (www.smartmethodology.org/forum) or directly to partners via email.

In 2014 and 2015, a record number of humanitarian crises took place across the world: Syria, Iraq, Central African Republic, Philippines and South Sudan². At this time, there exists no other project, organization or coordination body that has the capacity to provide this high level and unique technical emergency support for surveys. With an increasing number of natural disasters and the protracted crisis in the Middle East, and based on the high level of acceptance and demand for the existing services, it is vital that the ESS remains a flexible survey support function to successfully address urgent and emerging field challenges in order to obtain valuable information for better decision-making during emergencies.

Capacity Building

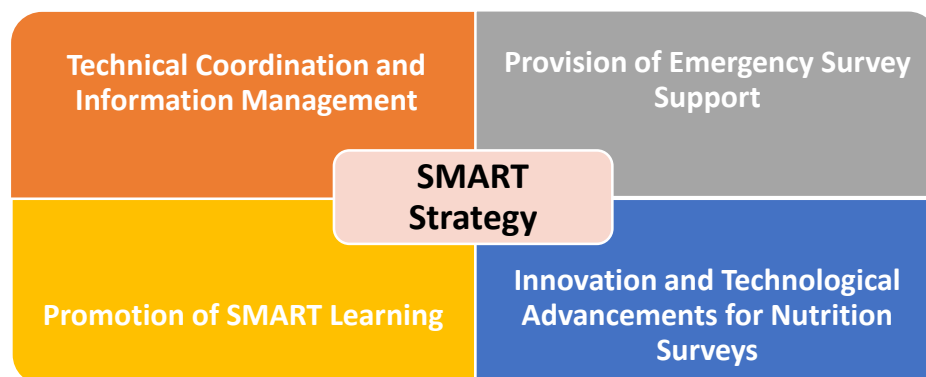
The SMART project has a proven track record for providing high quality technical capacity building with over 1,200 people trained since 2009. Curriculum for Survey Manager, Field Supervisor and Master Trainers has been developed and delivered around the world in three languages. The toolbox of learning and support materials has grown and is available online for users.

The evolution of various nutrition assessment methodologies coupled with high staff turnover continues to create the need for continued capacity building³. Evaluations of trainings in 2014 and 2015 have highlighted the importance of increasing SMART awareness and capacity with government policymakers as well as the importance of continued support to nutrition information working groups^{4,5,6}

Strategic Plan

Pillars of SMART

To address these challenges SMART has developed a strategic plan centering on four core pillars of engagement:



¹ ESS support can include any of the following:

- Guidance on implementation of mid- to large-scale surveys, including the coordination, planning, technical guidance, training and supervision of inter-agency personnel.
- Technical expertise for national-level Clusters for the coordination, implementation and management of nutrition surveys.
- Technical advice and capacity building to national-level information working groups on how to improve survey management, data collection, analysis and validation.
- Leadership on the design and piloting of contextualized methodological approaches.

² OCHA (2015). Available from: <<http://www.unocha.org/where-we-work/emergencies>>

³ . This finding was further confirmed by a number of Learning Needs Analyses conducted over the past two years in the following: Global-level; regional-level in Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, East Africa; and at national-level in Bangladesh, South Sudan.

⁴ SMART 2015, East Africa Regional Meeting Report.

⁵ SMART 2014, Middle East Learning Needs Analysis.

⁶ SMART 2015, South Asia Learning Needs Analysis.

Our Goal

To provide global and regional technical support on nutrition assessments to improve the quality of response capacity of nutrition agencies.

Our Objectives

To reach our ambitious goal over the next three years, SMART will focus on the following 5 core objectives:

1: Enhance the role of SMART project convenor and leverage new partnerships within the humanitarian, development and private sector.

To achieve this objective, SMART commits to:

- Ensuring a strong presence in various global nutrition fora including the Global Nutrition Cluster and its Strategic Advisory Group, FEWSNET and Integrated Phase Classification (IPC).
- Maintaining open communication with key nutrition assessment stakeholders including UNICEF, various NGOs and national Ministries of Health through coordination mechanisms will be maintained in order to enhance information sharing.
- Being present and actively advocating for the methodology at global nutrition and assessment conferences and learning events, and
- Engaging nutrition partners through high quality technical global Assessment Working Group workshops.
- Coordinating with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and translating and disseminating outputs to users around the world.
- Actively engaging at regional levels in East Africa, Middle East and South Asia to provide technical, capacity building and coordination support where and when required.

2: Provide Emergency Survey Support (ESS) in areas of high priority

To achieve this objective, SMART commits to:

- Coordinating with relevant stakeholders for the provision of short term timely technical expertise in humanitarian crises or high-risk nutrition situations with an absence of reliable data.
- Documenting and disseminating experiences and lessons learned during emergency survey support deployments.

3: Enhance the technical capacity of nutrition partners to conduct SMART surveys

To achieve this objective, SMART commits to:

- Achieving a better understanding of global and regional needs and prioritization of resources, capacity needs analyses will be undertaken in various regions in order to fully understand and develop regional partner needs for regionalized support.
- Exploring innovative partnerships for the sustainability and wider dissemination of nutrition assessment tools and resources for all users of the methodology.
- Increasing the coverage and utilization of SMART learning through the development of e-learning.

4: Contribute to innovative research and development for the advancements of new contexts, target populations and technology for nutritional assessments.

To achieve this objective, SMART commits to:

- Piloting new and relevant innovative mobile technology and ODK in the field of nutrition surveys and surveillance based on varied regional contexts, especially in the urban areas
- Integrating training modules on ODK platform will be incorporated in capacity building events, as well as the development of standardized SMART questionnaires for ODK for wide dissemination among partners.
- Redeveloping a new the Emergency Nutrition Assessment (ENA) software which can be used on various platforms and which will have increased functionality and data checks. ENA is utilized to facilitate the planning, data collection, analysis, and reporting of anthropometric, mortality, and food security survey data in a standardised and simplified manner.
- Conducting research on the feasibility and relevance of new tools for data collection and a cost-effective analysis (CEA) of SMART.

5: Increase access and awareness of SMART learning, tools and resources

To achieve this objective, SMART commits to:

- Maintaining the SMART website and its online technical forum at www.smartmethodology.org.
- Communicating to users about new changes in SMART, software developments and new tools and resources available through regular and pertinent modes of media.
- Documenting lessons learned and field experiences to inform policies and practices and advocate for the use of the methodology.

SMART Programming beyond 2017

The importance of defining a model of sustainability for SMART programming and ensuring the longevity and overall success of nutrition assessments using the methodology is an important consideration moving forward. As an active member of nutrition coordination structures at the global and regional levels, the identification and strengthening of existing systems will continue during the course of the strategy.

SMART will continue to engage key stakeholders at the GNC to determine both the level of demand for emergency survey support over the next three years as the capacity of Governments and organizations to launch their own surveys grows. It is anticipated that the technical level at which SMART currently provides advisory services will evolve by 2017 with stakeholders having more capacity in country for conducting surveys and SMART remaining a high level assessment advisory body.

Cost recovery and partnership models for capacity building will be explored over the next three years and an investment will be made into the development of online learning resources to further develop the learning toolbox. SMART will explore the feasibility of working closely with other training institutions in the provision of face-to-face SMART capacity building events in order to sustainably expand the coverage of knowledge of the methodology.

Structure

The SMART team is comprised of a Director, a Senior Program Manager, a SMART Program Manager (Toronto, Canada), two Regional SMART Coordinators (Nairobi, Kenya and Amman, Jordan), and one SMART Program Officer based in Nairobi, Kenya.