

SQ-LNS
TASK FORCE

Scaling-up SQ-LNS: challenges and opportunities

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Louga, Senegal. Photo credit: Helen Keller International



TWO MAJOR CHALLENGES TO SCALING-UP SQ-LNS



FINANCING



FRAGMENTATION

CHALLENGE #1

FINANCING

THE CHALLENGE

- Tectonic change in global development funding, which has affected nutrition programs
- Constriction of focus onto life-saving treatment of wasting
- Prevention of disease has always been a harder sell

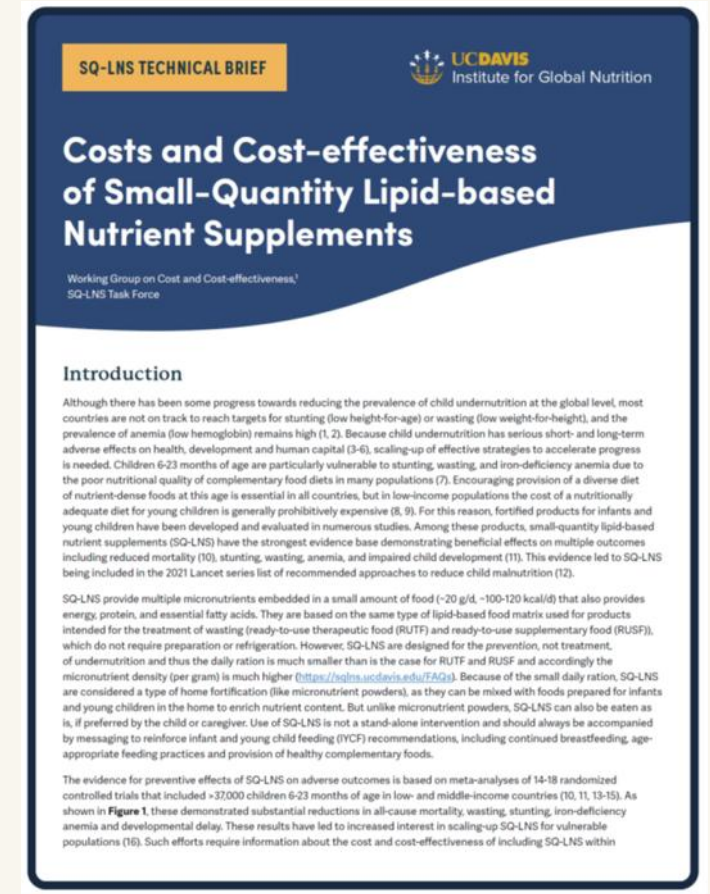
IS PROVISION OF SQ-LNS COST-EFFECTIVE?

Current evidence suggests that **provision of SQ-LNS can be very cost-effective** if properly implemented and integrated into an existing delivery platform

- Take advantage of existing human resources; share overhead, training and supervision costs
- Technical brief available at: <https://sqlns.ucdavis.edu/technical-brief>

Cost-benefit evidence (Copenhagen Consensus analysis¹)

- Targeted to the poorest 60% of the population in the 40 LMICs with the highest rates of child stunting
- Benefit : cost ratio 13.7 : 1



¹Larsen B, Hoddinott J, Razvi S. Investing in nutrition: A global best investment case. Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis. 2023;1-20.

EVIDENCE ON THE COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF SQ-LNS

Cost per DALY averted ranged from \$253 to \$1,186

- Higher cost in less efficient programs (e.g. Burkina Faso program)
- In more efficient programs, cost per DALY was < GDP per capita

Country	Bangladesh	Burkina Faso	Mali	Uganda
Cost per DALY averted (undiscounted 2021 USD)	\$548-780 ¹	\$1,186	\$826	\$253-368 ¹
GDP per capita (2021 USD)	\$2,458	\$893	\$874	\$884

¹Lower and upper estimates based on assuming 27% and 18% mortality reductions, respectively.

COSTS AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS

BENEFIT TO COST RATIO*:

13.7:1

for children
aged 6-23 months

TOTAL COST:

Providing SQ-LNS daily costs

\$50

per child-year



COST-EFFECTIVE:

Cost-effectiveness can be enhanced when SQ-LNS is properly implemented and integrated into an existing delivery platform

*When targeted to the poorest 60% of the population in the 40 LMICs with the highest rates of child stunting (Larsen et al. 2023)

FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE COSTS AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF SQ-LNS

Potential supply-side efficiencies

- Product costs
 - Innovations in packaging may reduce price over time
 - Efficiencies of scale with global scale-up
- Local production
 - Reduce transport costs and improve procurement timelines
 - But, local producers may not be able to offer as competitive a product price as global producers.

¹Galasso, Weber, Stewart et al., 2019

²Becquey, Huybregts, Zongrone et al., 2019; Huybregts, Le Port, Becquey et al., 2019



FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE COSTS AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF SQ-LNS

Potential program delivery efficiencies

- Targeting those most likely to benefit:
 - Children in high-risk settings
 - Children who start supplementation at 6 months of age
- Shortening supplementation duration to periods of greatest risk:
 - Youngest children
 - Seasonal food insecurity
 - Post-recovery from wasting
 - But, benefits of shorter duration are currently unclear
- Optimizing procurement to align with coverage



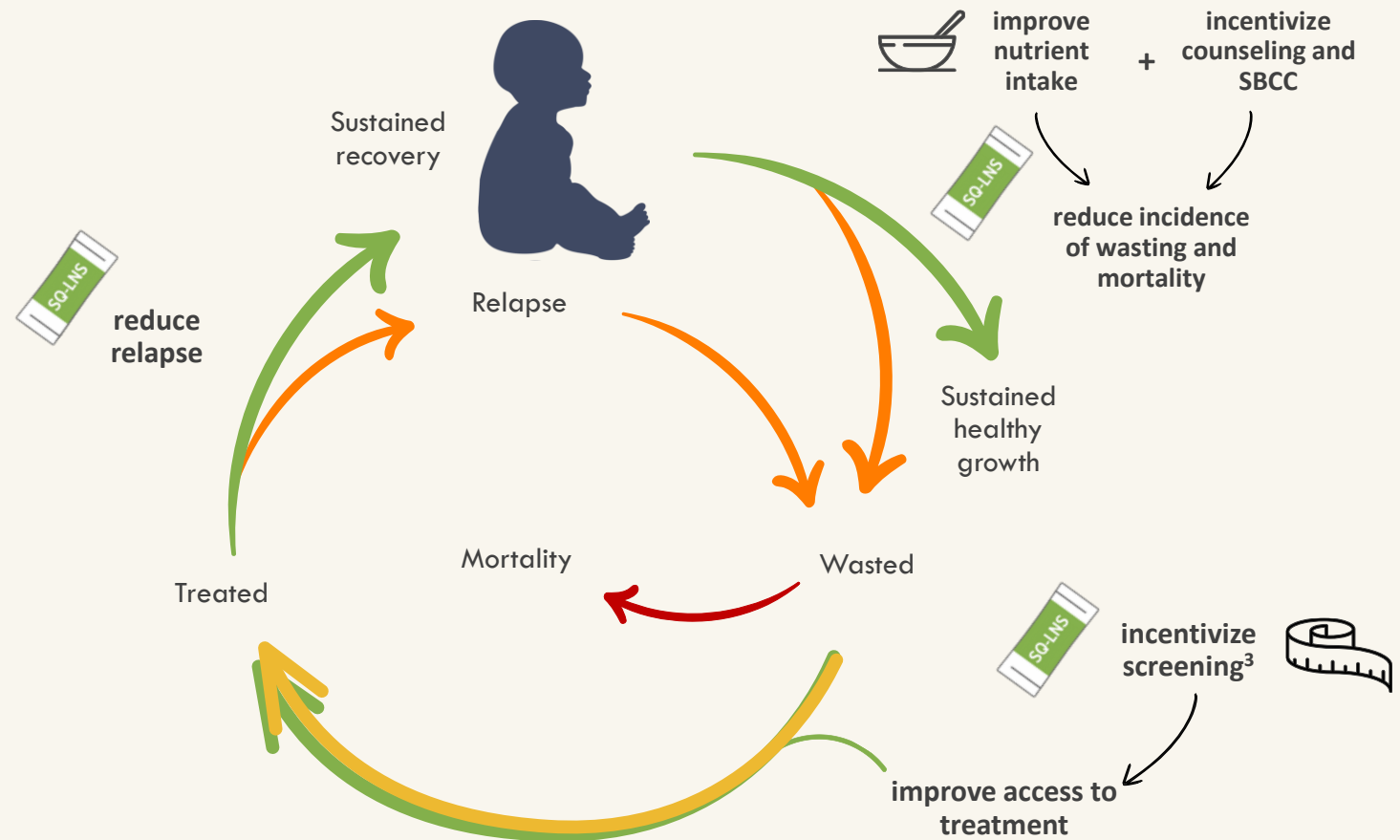
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION

- SQ-LNS can be incorporated into many types of delivery platforms: ex. community health programs, routine health system contacts, social protection programs
- SQ-LNS may incentivize utilization of other services
- Strategic integration could create win-wins for nutrition and other goals



BREAKING THE CYCLE OF CHILD WASTING

Potential benefits of integrating SQ-LNS for children 6-23 mos. into the continuum of care



PROGRAMMATIC LEARNINGS: NUTRIVAX

What Is Nutrivax?

A cluster-randomized trial that pairs nutrition supplementation with vaccination, conducted in Yobe state, in northwest Nigeria.

Objective

To evaluate whether SQ-LNS serves as an incentive for families to bring their children in for vaccinations.

Implementation

Led by ALIMA in partnership with Nigeria's Ministry of Health, PAC-CI program, Yobe University Hospital, Inserm, IRD, University of Bordeaux.



Funding: Eleanor Crook Foundation, GAVI.

Results: Available in mid 2026.

Yobe State, Nigeria (2025). Photo credit: ©Nandak Chingle / ALIMA

FINANCING OPPORTUNITY:



Three funding channels

The Programme Window: coordinates global investments to countries without a requirement for additional domestic funding commitments

The Match Window: mobilizes a 1 : 1 match between domestic and donor funding to support procurement of essential nutrition supplies

The Supplier Window: supports local manufacturers to produce essential nutrition supplies such as RUTF, MMS, and SQ-LNS

www.childnutritionfund.org

FINANCING OPPORTUNITY:



The CNF Match Window has unlocked **US\$99 million** in co-financed resources (combined CNF and domestic funding) for 18 countries



1.2 million children

with severe wasting treated with RUTF



389,000 children

received Small-Quantity Lipid-Based Nutrient Supplements (SQ-LNS)



323,000 children

reached with two annual doses of vitamin A



59,700 pregnant women

received multiple micronutrient supplements (MMS)

www.childnutritionfund.org

PROGRAMMATIC LEARNINGS: NIGERIA, AN EARLY ADOPTER OF SQ-LNS

- **2021-2022:** Pilot conducted in Gombe state under the Child Wasting Innovation Programme
 - Target group: children 6-23 months old
 - Dose and duration: 1 x 20 g sachet/day for 6 months or until the child was 24 months old
 - Distribution: Every 4 weeks via Child Welfare Clinic Days
 - Education and counseling re: improved complementary feeding practice
- **2025:** Programmatic scale-up
 - 2 million children to be reached
 - Multiple stakeholders involved: Government of Nigeria, UNICEF, Child Nutrition Fund, local partners
 - Local production of SQ-LNS



Photo credit: UNICEF

CHALLENGE #2: FRAGMENTATION

THE CHALLENGE

- Leading technical organizations are undergoing significant restructuring in the face of major budget cuts
 - Potential loss of technical expertise and leadership
 - Potential stalled momentum
- Poor coordination or communication increases the risk of inefficiencies
 - Potential to re-invent the wheel or repeat mistakes of the past
 - Potential overlap with other organizations' activities could yield inefficient duplication of efforts

PRIORITIES FOR THE TASK FORCE IN 2026-2027

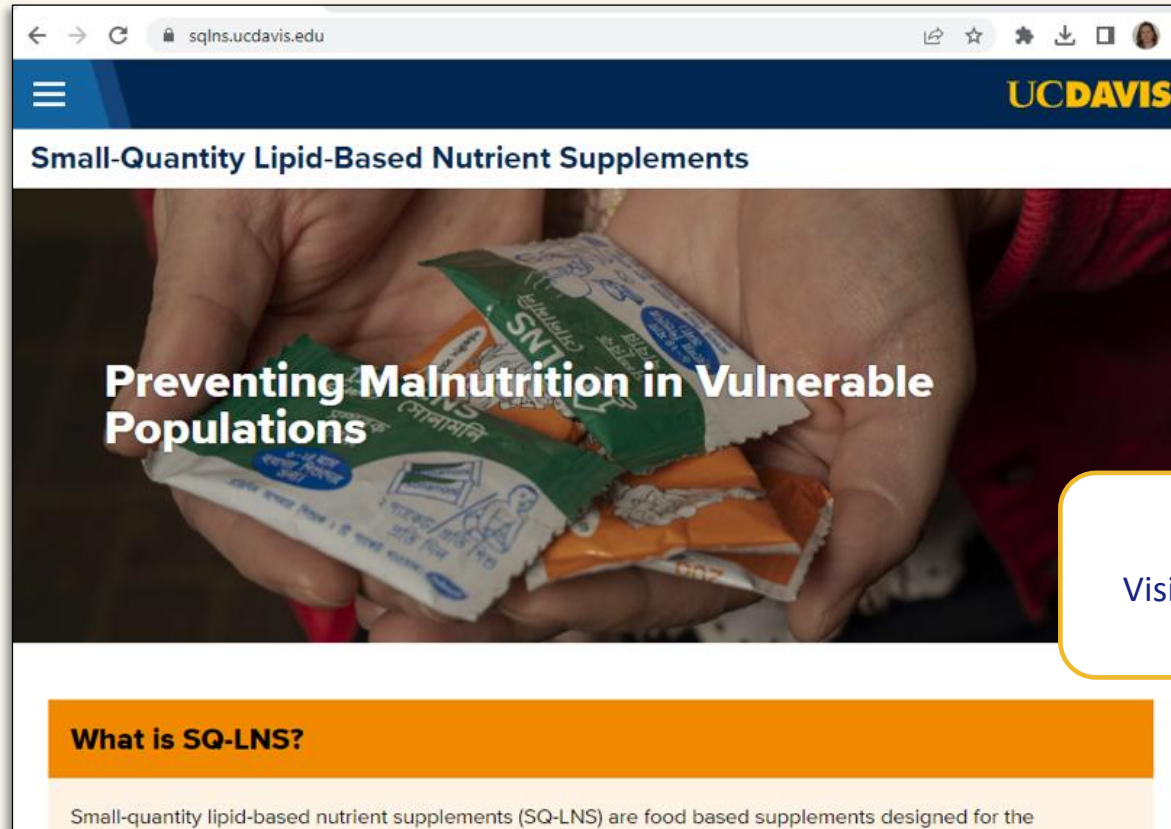
Costs, financing, and strategic integration

- Research on alternative packaging designs
- Research on lower cost, shorter duration delivery options
- Research on SQ-LNS integration with treatment of wasting
- Research on integration with child vaccine delivery
- Strengthening connections with the Child Nutrition Fund

Coordination

- Developing three case studies on lessons learned using different delivery platforms
- Coordinating with implementing organizations to develop M&E guidance
- Strategic thinking: how does SQ-LNS fit into food systems and food security programs?

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TASK FORCE



sqlns.ucdavis.edu

Visit our website for FAQs, research updates, and operational guidance.

Thank you