

Action brief

Decentralizing the national nutrition platform in Burundi

Country: Burundi**Topics:** Coordination**Sub-topics:** Strengthening capacity to ensure better coordination with sectors or groups**Date:** 2023

Overview



A new dynamic of intersectoral collaboration has emerged in Burundi since the country joined the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement in 2013. High-level commitment to improving nutrition through platforms or coordination mechanisms has helped stakeholders work better together, and it was in this spirit that Burundi established its

Provincial and Communal Platforms for Food Security and Nutrition (PPSAN and PCSAN).

An April 2019 decree on the creation, organization, mission and operation of the Multisectoral Food Security and Nutrition Platform (PMSAN) in Burundi placed the fight against malnutrition on centre stage, establishing the PMSAN at the national level. A second decree in 2021 decentralized the platform through the creation of provincial and communal coordination structures.

Previously, only the national coordination platform provided a forum for discussing issues related to the fight against malnutrition. Decentralization makes it possible to include new stakeholders closer to the operational level.



Objectives of the action brief

- This action brief shares an example of multisector coordination and shows how national nutrition coordination platforms can be decentralized to the operational level.



Period covered

- The process of decentralizing and devolving the PMSAN began in 2014. At that time, decentralized platforms were not subject to a specific legal framework; it was not until 2021 that a decree was issued governing the establishment and mission of the PPSAN and PCSAN.



What action was taken?

In addition to the 2021 decree, the decentralization processes are governed by a ministerial order and a decree of the Prime Minister. Provincial visits during the creation of the platforms helped raise local awareness of the importance of an integrated, multisectoral approach to the fight against malnutrition. This strengthened local ownership of the process.

Platforms have been set up throughout the country, from the highest level down to the communal level. To date, all provinces and communes have a decentralized platform. Ministry representatives at the provincial and communal levels form steering committees to oversee platform activities.

Financing involved a collaboration of the government, the World Bank, United Nations agencies, national partners and non-governmental organizations. The Government of Burundi recently introduced quarterly financial support for the PPSANs.

The Permanent Executive Secretariat of the PMSAN is responsible for reviewing the detailed plans provided by the

PPSANs before transferring the funds – a decision that aims to strengthen the mobilization and impact of the platforms.

The Permanent Executive Secretariat also monitors the operation of the PPSANs and PCSANs through quarterly visits to the field for supervision or technical assistance. This support strengthens local capacity and offers a degree of legitimacy. In this way, the practices acquired at the national level are passed on to local platforms – which, although aligned with national priorities, are adapted to the contexts in which they operate.

The creation of provincial and communal platforms has improved the understanding of local multisectoral approaches to coordinating food security and nutrition interventions, and the ownership of issues by direct beneficiaries has been strengthened.

In addition, synergies have been fostered through the monitoring of projects being developed or implemented by decentralized platforms. For example, the platforms can triangulate and improve national nutritional data, contributing to a better understanding of the realities.



What was the role of the SUN Movement in this good practice?

The SUN Movement has helped disseminate the multisectoral approach adopted by the PPSAN and PCSAN.

The various SUN networks, in particular the United Nations Network as well as NGO and civil society networks, have provided strong financial and technical support.

The Government of Burundi, through its senior administrative authorities, facilitated success by putting in place the legal frameworks governing the PPSAN and PCSAN.

Other partners, such as the World Bank, also have made a significant contribution to making the decentralization of the PMSAN a reality.



Adaptation and applicability

→ **Start by establishing a legal framework for the decentralization and devolution of the platform. Involve high-level authorities to ensure coordination at the highest level.**

→ **Involve administrative authorities to ensure greater ownership at the grassroots level.**

→ **Regularly review difficulties, constraints and areas for improvement.**



Challenges

- The implementation of the PPSAN and PCSAN has been delayed by constraints on the availability of funds.
- In some provinces, local stakeholders have been slow to set up platforms at the commune level, probably due to the more or less difficult context in which the platform must be set up and by the leadership of the provincial governor.
- The provincial platforms sometimes had to be supported by the Permanent Executive Secretariat of the PMSAN in the organization of the initial meetings. Supervision sessions for the PPSANs were held to encourage provincial authorities to make the PPSAN operational and to set up PCSANs.



Next steps

- Burundi is considering extending financial support to the communal platforms.
- Discussions are being held on the inclusiveness of the platforms and the optimal integration of non-governmental players.
- The capacities of members of decentralized platforms are being strengthened through the finalization of a manual to provide training on specific topics, such as planning and monitoring and evaluation.



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