



## USE OF DATA AND INFORMATION

### For defining a new common results framework

The Secretariat of Food and Nutritional Security (SESAN) is one of the primary users of the nutrition information system, given its role in monitoring the progress and evaluating the effects of the food and nutrition strategic plans and programs, coordination of various sectors/ministries, building capacity and advocating for continued investment.

SESAN used the results of the annual impact surveys in the PPHO-targeted municipalities<sup>iii</sup> to define how the revised national nutrition strategy (2016-20) could be modified to enhance future impact. Despite PPHO's comprehensive and evidence-based approach, there was a lack of impact on stunting. Most households only received four of the ten PPHO priority actions within the 1000-day window. This information contributed to scaling back the geographic focus and number of core interventions to be prioritized under the new strategy.<sup>iv</sup>

“ When you think of information systems you say, ‘who is going to be my target audience?’ and it is not one, there are many target audiences and it [the information system] has to serve all of them... if not, it is simple data that is stored and that no one consults.

**German Gonzalez, SESAN** ”

### For improved program implementation

Monthly monitoring data gathered by SESAN personnel from health posts provide information to improve service delivery. Visits to 354 of 1191 health posts to assess their capacity to deliver the basic standards of care for pregnant women and young children revealed that over 50% of health posts were out of stock of iron and/or folic acid supplements for pregnant women, identifying the need for supply chain improvements.<sup>v</sup>

### For advocacy and accountability

The public availability of real-time spending on nutrition programs is very important, both for government accountability and proactive program management. Integrated Financial Management Information is available to the public through the Ministry of Public Finance website portal, Sistema de Contabilidad Integrada Gubernamental (SICOIN), where users can find national budget and expenditure data for the current year, updated daily. An annual performance dashboard report is also available online (see Figure B). SESAN monitors nutrition spending on a daily basis and intervenes when there is an issue, advocating at ministerial levels for the agreed budget allocation and engaging with program directors to discuss logistics and supply problems.

**Figure B:** Annual Financial Report on Implementation of National Food and Nutrition Security Operational Plan (rows provide summary of implementation by government ministries - e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health, etc.)



The Alliance for Nutrition, a private-sector group made up of 23 business and civil society organizations, in 2013 conducted regular user surveys to monitor primary health service delivery. The results of these monitoring exercises were first shared with the government and then with the national press.<sup>vi</sup>

### For multi-stakeholder information sharing

Guatemala's Food and Nutrition Security Early Warning System tracks the timing and severity of seasonal food and nutrition insecurity. This system provides data for both climatic and agricultural forecasts, predicting when short-term assistance will be needed. This information is shared by SESAN with the multisectoral and multipartite committees that include civil society, UN agencies and donors who are actively involved in analysing the situation and formulating recommendations.

## THE PROCESS AND STRUCTURES

All nutrition programs and monitoring are government funded and housed under SESAN. The government receives support from the Group of Supporting Institutions (GIA), including UN agencies, government donors and various international organizations.<sup>vii</sup>

Since 1997, the Food and Nutrition Security National Information System (SIINSAN) is a repository of current information on the food and nutrition security situation, disaggregated at national, departmental and municipal levels.<sup>i</sup> A national monitoring and evaluation system, SIMON (Sistema de Monitoreo y Evaluación), is used as a tool for tracking public expenditure and targets at both the central and decentralized levels. It brings together various sources of data, both primary and secondary (collected by other ministries), with variation in the quality, frequency and level of advancement of each source. For example, the health management information system (HMIS) is based on data gathered through paper-based forms at health posts which are sent to the district level for digital data entry and validation before being sent to the regional and national levels. As a result, there can be a delay in accessing current information. SESAN currently conducts regular internal audits to verify the actions reported by the Ministry of Health (MOH), including the quality and timeliness of services delivered.

SIMON includes data collected and reports on a weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual basis (Figure C). In addition to routine data collection, SESAN randomly selects health posts on a monthly basis for validation of information

submitted including interviews with health staff and mothers of children under 2 years regarding the services they received. Digital data entry to a web application and geo-positioning of the health post provides information for mapping purposes. Monthly reports provide information on trends in malnutrition prevalence and health service coverage,<sup>viii</sup> expenditure tracking for nutrition and food security activities, and service coverage for the 1000-day window (Moni1000/MONIMIL).

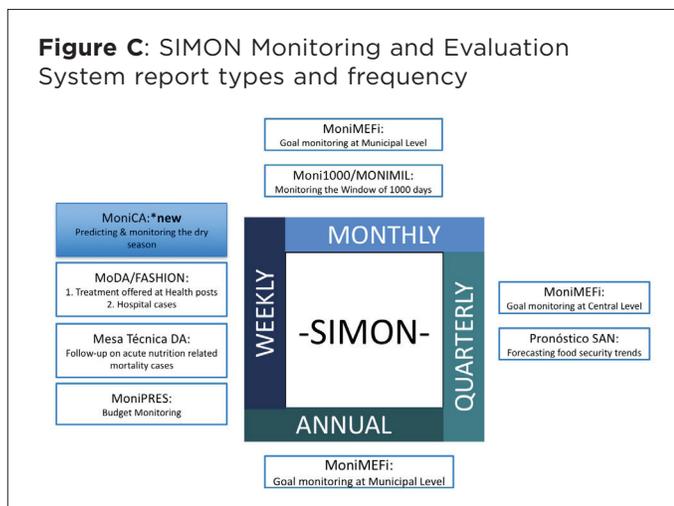
Quarterly monitoring focuses on progress in reaching targets at the central level (MoniMEFi). Quarterly forecasts (Pronóstico SAN) are conducted on food security related trends, a joint effort with the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Food.

SIINSAN also includes Guatemala's Food and Nutrition Security Early Warning System, which collects data and analyses the factors affecting the availability of food and the population's access to it. The system includes four monitoring mechanisms: quarterly forecast of food and nutrition security, community-level sentry sites, endemic corridors of acute malnutrition of children younger than five years of age, and crop monitoring sites.<sup>ix</sup>

The National Statistics Institute (INE) conducts annual monitoring and impact assessment surveys in coordination with SESAN, the Ministry of Public Finance and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) as an external technical advisor. These annual assessments of key impact indicators are clearly outlined in the national policy.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

SESAN takes a lead role in sensitizing and training personnel at various government levels on the systems in place to monitor nutrition program performance and to collect and use this information. A cascade process for capacity building is often used, whereby departmental delegates of SESAN meet to discuss the results of the most recent monitoring information and then meet with their municipality monitors to pass on this information. Technical support for nutrition is provided by the Inter-institutional Technical Committee and the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP).<sup>x</sup> The UN system is the primary actor in providing technical and financial support for response to food insecurity and recovery, including building the technical capacity of government officials to



provide monitoring and analysis as part of the early warning system and the government's response.

According to civil society organizations and the Alliance for Nutrition, the challenge is to facilitate access and the use of information to the general public. Various international donors and civil society organizations use information shared through SIINSAN for strengthening capacities in monitoring, social audits and advocacy. Although there is no current mechanism for incorporating the data collected by civil society organizations in the central repository, efforts are made to share this information with the government and provide a comparative perspective on service delivery at the community level.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHER COUNTRIES

- Training and maintaining personnel in government posts is key. Government turnover (e.g. 2 Ministers of Health in less than 4 years) at both national and local levels makes it difficult to maintain continuity and momentum.
- Conducting social audits has been useful in putting pressure on the government to address the implementation issues raised by these audits. It is helpful to release the results of the audits internally with the government prior to making them public, to foster a collaborative relationship rather than a confrontational one.
- A strong information system can only go so far in enhancing program performance and achieving results. There also needs to be a strong governance structure in order to support the changes that need to be made, as highlighted by the information gathered and disseminated.
- Collecting data in digital form directly at the health post level provides greater flexibility for making information available in a timely manner for decision-makers.

## References and Notes

- i Government of Guatemala, Strategic Plan for Food and Nutrition Security (PESAN 2016-2010)
- ii SIMON website, [http://www.siinsan.gob.gt/mapas\\_estaticos](http://www.siinsan.gob.gt/mapas_estaticos), downloaded 4 August 2017
- iii PPHO targeted 166 municipalities with the highest prevalence of chronic malnutrition and 213 municipalities with the highest levels of acute malnutrition; source: Zero Hunger Plan (English overview)
- iv Although the national strategy recommends the same interventions across the country, the 81 priority municipalities receive additional resources to increase coverage and enhance quality of execution of those interventions.
- v MONIMIL PUESTOS DE SALUD Reporte de Existencia de Insumos para entregar Acciones de la Ventana de los Mil Días y Atención del Hambre Estacional Marzo, 2016. [http://216.230.129.44/SIINSAN\\_carrusel/Files/MONIMIL\\_MARZO\\_INFORME\\_INSUMOS.pdf](http://216.230.129.44/SIINSAN_carrusel/Files/MONIMIL_MARZO_INFORME_INSUMOS.pdf)
- vi SMS Budget Analysis Draft
- vii USAID, EU, IDB, WFP, JICA, UNICEF, CIDA, UNDP, WHO, Pan-American Health Organization, FAO, International Organization for Migration, AECID, World Bank, several Embassies (Canada, Taiwan, Sweden, EU) Source: SUN website Guatemala country profile
- viii Estado Nutricional de menores de Cinco Anos y Mujeres en Edad Fértil (Tomo I)- Impact report 2014
- ix SMS "Summary of the exchange between countries of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement Discussion on El Niño". 28 June 2016.
- x SUN Website Profile: Guatemala

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