

JOINT-ASSESSMENT BY THE NATIONAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM,
IN LINE WITH THE SUN MONITORING,
EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING
(MEAL) SYSTEM

PROGRESS MARKER EXPLANATORY NOTE



PROCESS 1: Bringing people together in the same space for action

Coordination mechanisms or platforms enable stakeholders to better work for improved nutrition outcomes. These platforms can serve to bring together a specific stakeholder, or they can be multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral platforms (MSP), with a broader membership, and may help to link stakeholder-specific platforms. Platforms can exist at both the national and sub-national level, with the two levels often being linked. MSPs are seen as operational when they enable the delivery of joint results, on issues relevant to nutrition. MSPs are also deemed functional they enable the mobilisation and engagement of relevant stakeholders, assist relevant national bodies in their decision-making, spur consensus around joint interests and recommendations, and foster dialogue, at the sub-national level.

Progress marker 1.1: Select/develop coordinating mechanisms at the country level

This progress marker looks at the presence of both stakeholder-specific and multi-stakeholder platforms or mechanisms, and how they are linked. The platforms that now focus on scaling up nutrition may have either been developed from existing mechanisms, or have created recently, and specifically, for this purpose.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Each stakeholder has a functional coordinating mechanism:
 - A convener has been nominated, such as a SUN government Focal Point, a donor convener, a civil society coordinator, a UN focal point, a business convener, or an academic representative, etc.;

- Members have identified a common set of priorities.
- Multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platform(s) exist and are convened regularly:
 - Terms of reference that explain how the MSP works are available and outline the roles of actors or other mechanisms that the MSP brings together;
 - There is evidence the MSP has been endorsed politically, formally or informally;
 - The local government provides leadership, and supports sub-national coordination mechanisms.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The coordination mechanism(s) for nutrition enables stakeholders from various sectors to work together, and consistently, over time, towards common priorities – with the support of the highest level of government.

Progress marker 1.2: Coordinate internally and expand membership/engage with other actors for broader influence

This progress marker looks at the internal coordination, among members, achieved by the multi-stakeholder platform. It also looks at efforts to increase collective influence by engaging new actors and stakeholders, resulting in expanded membership. This can encompass sub-national platforms or actors, grassroot-focused organisations, or the executive branch of government, for example.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Sub-national multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platforms can support local nutrition planning and actions in many ways, including:
 - New, dedicated sub-national mechanisms are established, or existing ones are adapted;
 - Sub-national mechanisms engage with specific local communities such as villages with limited access, indigenous or tribal peoples or the impoverished;
 - National mechanisms are decentralised;
 - National and sub-national mechanisms can be linked in many ways, including:
 - National actors participate in sub-national mechanisms, and vice versa;
 - Communication between the central and local levels is institutionalised, including sharing reports, or organising periodic meetings.
- Efforts by mechanisms to diversify their engagement and membership by reaching out to:
 - Non-traditional donors, new segments and sectors ranging from civil society and business, new UN agencies;
 - Coalitions, such as SUN global Networks;
 - Executive-level political leadership;
 - Additional government sectors or agencies, including those responsible for gender equality and/or women's affairs, child protection or equivalent, and disaster risk reduction/early warning/humanitarian responses, where relevant.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence that the national coordinating mechanism is also comprises platforms at the sub-national level, to reach local communities.

Progress marker 1.3: Engage within/contribute to the multi-stakeholder platform (MSP)

This progress marker looks at whether the MSP fosters collaboration among stakeholders, at the national level, on issues most relevant to the nutrition agenda. It also looks at whether it fosters commitment and follow-through. When relevant, interactions at the sub-national level should also be addressed.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- The MSP focuses on strategic agenda-setting for effective results:
 - The MSP prioritises important issues, especially identifying nutrition problems and solutions;
 - The MSP takes into account legal frameworks, planning, finance, advocacy and communication;
 - The MSP agrees on priorities and develops workplans, with roles and responsibilities for stakeholders and actors (see Annex 1 of the reporting template).
- The MSP encourages meaningful engagement among actors:
 - Relevant stakeholders attend MSP meetings, without key actors being chronically absent, and actively contribute to discussions;
 - All MSP members agree to report and advocate for change as per the MSP's priorities, in their own organisations and wider constituencies;
 - MSP members collectively identify capacity gaps for the effective functioning of the MSP, and agree on practical steps to overcome challenges/bottlenecks.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of a substantial engagement from members against the priorities set.

Progress marker 1.4: Track, report and reflect on own contributions and accomplishments

This progress marker looks at whether the MSP tracks and reports on implementation of agreed actions, by individual actors and stakeholders, and their contribution to the MSP's collective progress towards agreed priorities. The MSP's ability to foster accountability is also considered.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Key stakeholder groups report, on a regular basis, on the activities undertaken to fulfil their commitments – as per agreed workplans.
- The MSP tracks, and reflects on the implementation of its workplan(s) to achieve priorities agreed upon.
- The MSP communicates progress among its members, using various means such as newsletters, reports, a website, etc.
- The MSP regularly reports on its achievements to the executive level of government.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of annual reports and other public documents that reflect on accomplishments by the MSP and contributions by the different stakeholders.

Progress marker 1.5: Sustain the political impact of the multi-stakeholder platform

This progress marker looks at the extent to which a multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder approach to nutrition is accepted as a national priority and institutionalised by all stakeholders.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Efforts to institutionalise the MSP into governmental processes could include:
 - Advocating to the executive levels of government, using the results achieved by the MSP, or other arguments;
 - The existence of a specific line item for nutrition coordination in national and/or sub-national government budgets;
 - The MSP, or its key functions, is integrated into national and/or sub-national planning mechanisms or processes.
- Efforts to institutionalise the MSP into non-governmental stakeholder processes can include:
 - The integration of support to the SUN coordination mechanism in partners' multi-year planning documents, such as the UNDAF and country cooperation agreements.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence on how it has been institutionalised into the processes and budgets of the government and/or other stakeholders.



PROCESS 2: Ensuring a coherent policy and legal framework

The existence of a coherent policy and legal framework should inform and guide how in-country stakeholders work together, for improved nutrition outcomes. Updated policies, strategies and legislations are fundamental to prevent conflict of interest among the wide range of actors involved in a complex societal topic such as nutrition. This process focuses on the enabling policy and legal environment.

Progress marker 2.1: Continuously analyse existing nutrition-relevant policies and legislation

This progress marker looks at the extent to which existing nutrition-relevant (specific and sensitive) policies and legislation are analysed using multi-sectoral consultative processes, with inputs from various stakeholders, and civil society, in particular. It denotes the availability of stock-taking documents and continuous context analysis to inform and guide policy-making.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Regular and multi-sectoral analyses and stock-taking of existing policies and regulations.
- Continuous assessment of existing policies and legal frameworks.
- Existence of review papers and analyses for policy-making.

Please note: Please highlight any nutrition-relevant (specific and sensitive) policies and legislation identified and analysed during the reporting period, and specify the type of consultative process that has been applied.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of the policies and legislation analysed

Progress marker 2.2: Continuously engage in advocacy to influence the development, updating and dissemination of relevant policy and legal framework

This progress marker looks at the extent to which in-country stakeholders work together and contribute, influence and advocate for the development of updated or new improved nutrition policy and legal frameworks for and their

dissemination (i.e. advocacy and communication strategies in place to support the dissemination of relevant policies). It focuses on how countries ascertain policy and legal coherence across different ministries and try to broaden political support, by encouraging parliamentary engagement. It also focuses on the efforts of in-country stakeholders to influence decision-makers for legislation and evidence-based policies that empower women and girls through equity-based approaches.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Existence of a national advocacy and communication strategy in support of the national nutrition plan, which includes awareness-raising and behaviour change communication at the community level.
- Advocacy for reviewing or revising policies and legal frameworks to determine their quality, whether they are fit-for-purpose, funded and implemented (please specify what actions, by which stakeholders and the result).
- Advocacy to ensure gender-sensitive and pro-female policy-making relating to nutrition has been undertaken.
- Stakeholders from diverse groups at both national and sub-national levels have developed joint advocacy narratives or strategies. Joint statements have been delivered, to effectively influence policy-making and budget allocation (specify which stakeholder groups and for which purpose).
- Up-to-date nutrition evidence (including for example national demographic and health surveys, SMART surveys or global reports) are used to feed into advocacy messaging, and publications such as policy briefs, statement, press releases etc.
- Traditional and social media is used to amplify key messages, create awareness and build demand for action on nutrition.
- Policy and/or legal frameworks and strategies on nutrition has been disseminated and communicated about, by stakeholders among relevant audiences, including at the regional, district and community level.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: to the MSP provides evidence of advocacy impact on policy and legal frameworks and supporting strategies

Progress marker 2.3: Develop or update coherent policies and legal frameworks through coordinated and harmonised in-country stakeholder efforts

This progress marker looks at the extent to which in-country stakeholders – the government (i.e. line ministries) and non-state partners – coordinate their inputs to ensure the development of coherent policy and legislative frameworks.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- The existence of updated nutrition-relevant policies and strategies (specific and sensitive).
- The coordination of nutrition policies and their regulation between relevant line ministries, such as the existence of ministerial guidelines, advice or support for mainstreaming nutrition into sectoral policies.
- Key stakeholder groups coordinate and harmonise inputs to national nutrition-related policies and legislation (specific and sensitive).
- The development or updating of policies or legal frameworks – with assistance from other MSP members in a bid to ascertain quality – especially those that are harmful or in conflict with the rights of women and girls.
- The existence of a review framework to ascertain nutrition policy coherence with other, development-related policies such as trade, agriculture, education, gender equality and women’s empowerment, child protection, disaster risk reduction, early warning, early action and humanitarian response and recovery etc.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of policies and legislation developed through coordinated efforts.

Progress marker 2.4: Operationalise/enforce legal framework

This progress marker looks at the availability of mechanisms to operationalise and enforce legislation, such as the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, maternity protection and paternity and parental leave laws, food fortification legislation, the right to food, among others.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- The availability of national and sub-national guidelines to operationalise legislation.
- Existence of national/sub-national mechanisms to operationalise and enforce legislation.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP gives evidence (such as relevant reports or documents) of law enforcement.

Progress marker 2.5: Track and report for learning and sustaining the policy and legislative impact

This progress marker looks at the extent to which existing policies and legislation have been reviewed and evaluated to document good practices, and the extent to which available lessons are shared by different constituencies within the multi-stakeholder platforms.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- The existence and use of policy studies, research monitoring reports, impact evaluation, public dissemination, etc.
- Individual stakeholders contribute to mutual learning.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of lessons learnt from reviews and evaluations, such as case studies and reports.



PROCESS 3: Aligning actions around common results

The alignment of actions across sectors that significantly contribute to improvements in nutrition demonstrates the extent to which multiple sectors and stakeholders are effectively working together, and the extent to which the policies and legislations are operationalised to ensure that everyone, women and children in particular, benefit from improved nutrition. This process delves into the operational side of policy and legal frameworks and how they translate into action. The term 'Common Results Framework' is used to describe a set of expected results agreed upon across different sectors of government and among key stakeholders, through a negotiated process. The existence of agreed common results would enable stakeholders to make their actions more nutrition driven through increased coordination or integration. In practice, a CRF may result in a set of documents that are recognised as a reference point for all sectors and stakeholders that work together for scaling up nutrition.

Progress marker 3.1: Align existing actions around national nutrition targets/policies

This progress marker looks at the extent to which in-country stakeholder groups take stock of what exists and align their own plans and programming for nutrition to reflect the national policies and priorities. It focuses on the alignment of actions across sectors and among relevant stakeholders that significantly contribute towards improved nutrition.

Please note: While progress marker 2.1 looks at the review of policies and legislation, progress marker 3.1 focuses on the review of programmes and implementation capacities.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Updated multi-sectoral nutrition situation analyses or overviews.
- Analyses of sectoral government programmes and implementation mechanisms.
- Stakeholder and nutrition action mapping.
- Multi-stakeholder consultations to align actions and address identified gaps.
- Mapping of existing gaps and agreement on gender-sensitive core nutrition actions that are aligned with policy and legal frameworks.
- Gender analyses conducted to identify gaps and bottlenecks in making sure women and girls are at the centre of all actions.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides documentation showing the alignment of actions across sectors and relevant stakeholders.

Progress marker 3.2: Translate policy and legal frameworks into an actionable Common Results Framework (CRF) for scaling up nutrition at the national and sub-national level

This progress marker looks at the extent to which in-country stakeholders agree on a Common Results Framework to effectively align interventions for improved nutrition. The CRF is recognised as the guidance for medium to long-term implementation of actions, with clearly identified nutrition targets. Ideally, the CRF should identify coordination mechanisms (and related capacity) and define the roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder. It should encompass an implementation matrix, an M&E Framework and costed interventions, including costs estimates for advocacy, coordination and M&E.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Defining the medium or long-term implementation objectives.
- Defining the implementation process with clear roles designated to individual stakeholder groups at the national and sub-national level.
- The assessment of coordination capacity to support the CRF and identifying priorities for capacity strengthening, at the national and sub-national level.
- An agreement on a CRF for scaling up nutrition. Elements of a CRF should include: the title of the CRF; implementation plans with defined roles of stakeholders in key sectors (e.g. health, agriculture, social protection, education, WASH, gender), defined capacity strengthening needs and priorities, cost estimates of included interventions and cost estimates for advocacy, coordination, capacity strengthening, M&E and operational research.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of a robust plan, at the national and sub-national level, that has been endorsed, technically and politically.

Progress marker 3.3: Organise and implement annual priorities as per the Common Results Framework

This progress marker looks at the sequencing and implementation of priority actions at the national and sub-national level. This requires, on the one hand, a clear understanding of gaps in terms of delivery capacity and, on the other hand, a willingness from in-country and global stakeholders to mobilise technical expertise to timely respond to the identified needs, in a coordinated manner.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Capacity assessments conducted for implementation, including of the workforce and other assets.
- Sequencing of priorities to mobilise and develop the capacity of implementing entities, in line with assessments and agreed arrangements.
- The existence of annual detailed workplans – jointly developed by relevant stakeholders – with measurable targets to guide implementation at national and sub-national levels.
- Training and/or support supervision provided to increase the coordination and the implementation capacity at national and sub-national levels – for the achievement of annual priorities.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of aligned actions around annual priorities, such as an annual workplan or implementation plan at the national and sub-national level, including evidence of progress in building capacity to organise and implement effective nutrition-specific and sensitive services and programmes aligned with the CRF.

Progress marker 3.4: Jointly monitor priority actions as per the Common Results Framework

This progress marker looks at how information systems are used to monitor the implementation of priority actions for good nutrition. It looks at the availability of joint progress reports that can meaningfully inform and guide the refinement of interventions and contribute towards harmonised targeting and coordinated service delivery among in-country stakeholders.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Information systems (e.g. multi-sectoral platforms and portals) are in place to regularly collect, analyse and communicate agreed upon indicators, focusing on measuring implementation coverage and performance.
- The existence of regular progress reports.
- Conducting joint annual/regular reviews and monitoring visits.
- Adjusting annual plans, including budgets based on analysis of performance.
- The existence of participatory monitoring and evaluation, by civil society.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of regular/annual joint reviews of implementation coverage and the performance of prioritised actions.

Progress marker 3.5: Evaluate the implementation of actions to understand, achieve and sustain nutrition impact

This progress marker looks at how results and success is being evaluated to inform implementation decision-making and building the evidence base for improved nutrition.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Reports and dissemination of the findings of population-based surveys, implementation studies, impact evaluation and operational research. This could also include social auditing of results and analyses of impact by civil society, which ensure that there is adherence to principles of equity, equality and non-discrimination, with women and girls at the centre of all actions.
- Capture and share lessons learnt, good practices, case studies, stories of change – especially those that empower women and girls – and implementation progress.
- Advocate for increased effective coverage of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programmes.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of evaluation of implementation at scale that demonstrates nutrition impact and is made publicly available.



PROCESS 4: Financial tracking and resource mobilisation

Assessing the financial feasibility of national plans to implement actions for improved nutrition is essential to determine funding requirements. The latter is based on the capability to track planned and actual spending on nutrition across relevant government ministries and from external partners. The existence of plans, with clearly costed actions, helps government authorities and key stakeholders (e.g. UN, donors, business, civil society) align and contribute resources to national priorities, estimate the required budget for implementation and identify financial gaps.

Progress marker 4.1: Cost and assess the financial feasibility of the CRF

This progress marker looks at the extent to which the government and all other in-country stakeholders provide inputs for the costing of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive actions across relevant sectors (costing exercises can be performed in various ways, including reviewing current spending or estimating unit costs).

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- The existence of cost estimations of nutrition-related actions at the national and sub-national level.
- The existence of costed plans for CRF implementation.
- Stakeholder groups have a joint overview of their allocations to nutrition-related programmes and actions, including overlaps and gaps.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides documents outlining the costing method, and the costed programmes or plans.

Progress marker 4.2: Track and report on financing for nutrition

This progress marker looks at the extent to which the government and all other in-country stakeholders track their allocations and expenditures (if available) for nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive actions in relevant sectors. This progress marker also aims to determine whether financial tracking for nutrition is reported and shared in a transparent manner with other partners of the MSP, including the government.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- MSP members engage in finance tracking and reporting, ensuring that there is consensus on the scope and the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of interventions in shared analysis.
- MSP members produce a shared report of nutrition-sensitive and specific interventions, disaggregated by sector and sex, where relevant, and financial sources (domestic and external resources) including:
 - Planned spending
 - Current allocations
 - Recent expenditures (within 1-2 years of the identified allocation period)
- MSP members track planned and actual disbursements of funds for nutrition-specific and sensitive interventions at the sub-national level (where required).
- The existence of reporting mechanisms that provide transparent and publicly available financial information.
- Geographic overlaps and gaps are clearly identified and resources are re-directed in areas or amongst populations that are in highest need, in line with the principles of equity, equality and non-discrimination.

- Social audits, the sharing of financial information among MSP members, and making financial information public.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of publicly available information on current allocations and recent actual spending.

Progress marker 4.3: Scale up and align resources including addressing financial shortfalls

This progress marker looks at whether the government and other in-country stakeholders identify financial gaps and mobilise additional funds, through increased alignment and allocation of budgets, advocacy, and setting-up of specific mechanisms.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- MSP members ensure consensus on financial shortfalls, based on cost estimates and current spending of agreed priority nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions.
- MSP members prioritise additional funding needs, and identify financial sources (domestic and external) including multi-sectoral funding.
- Government partners strategically align their allocations towards identified priorities, including re-programming large sectoral investments to make them more nutrition driven or re-directing resources towards areas/populations most in need in line with principles of equity, equality and non-discrimination.
- Government partners strategically increase government budget allocations.
- Development partners align their funds to address the shortfalls and mobilise additional resources, as needed.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence on how they have been able to identify financial gaps and mobilise additional funds through, among others, better alignment of resources or setting up of specific mechanisms.

Progress marker 4.4: Turn pledges into disbursements

This progress marker looks at how governments and other in-country stakeholders turn pledges into disbursements. It includes the ability of donors to look at how their disbursements are timely and in line with the scheduled fiscal year.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- Turning pledges into proportional disbursements and ensuring the realisation of external commitments.
- Governments disburse funds in a timely and predictable way:
 - Reducing delays in disbursements at national and sub-national level;
 - Addressing problems of absorption.
- Development partners disburse funds in a timely and predictable way:
 - Disclosing the timeline for disbursements;
 - Resource disbursement timelines are agreed with the government.
- Government reports on funding received and disbursed from domestic and external resources (through national budgets or other finance platforms).

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of disbursements against pledges (domestic or external), including how they have addressed bottlenecks in disbursing funds in a timely and predictable way.

Progress marker 4.5: Ensure predictability of multi-year funding to sustain implementation results and nutrition impact

This progress marker looks at how the government and in-country stakeholders collectively ensure predictable and long-term funding for better results and impact. It looks at important changes such as the continuum between short-

term humanitarian and long-term development funding, the establishment of flexible but predictable funding mechanisms and the sustainable addressing of funding gaps.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT PROGRESS COULD LOOK LIKE:

- The existence of a long-term and flexible resource mobilisation strategy.
- A coordinated reduction of financial gaps through domestic and external contributions is seen at the national and sub-national level.
- Gradual increases are experienced in flexible domestic contributions.
- The existence of long-term/multi-year financial resolutions or projections.
- The existence of finance mechanisms that aim to ensure a continuum between humanitarian and development funding.

Minimum requirement(s) for scoring 4: The MSP provides evidence of multi-year funding mechanisms.
