



THE SUN MOVEMENT
POOLED FUND

Atelier annuel du réseau SUN Société civile /renforcement de capacités

Nutrition & Capital humain : synergie d'action de la société civile pour plus d'impact en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.

Thème 5: Pooled fund lesson learnt

The following concept note was written and shared for the participants' consideration prior to the session. The interactive session then focused on a series of questions aimed at capturing their feelings about the Pooled Fund. The discussion focused on their needs, sustainability, the Fund as a last resort and trust/collaboration with the Focal Point. Some thoughts regarding the future vision of the Pooled Fund were also shared.

1. Brief introduction with background information and rationale for establishing the Pooled Fund

Part of the SUN Movement's second strategy and road map (2016-2020), the Pooled Fund was created in 2017 as a source of funding to support catalytic and innovative projects that would be able to help achieve the SUN Movement Strategic Objectives and national plans to improve nutrition and stakeholder capacities in SUN countries.

UNOPS manages grants and funding from governments and donors totalling some 18.5 million dollars.

The Pooled Fund aims to encourage other relevant actors to engage in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national multisectoral and multi-stakeholder nutrition plans, at national and sub-national level.



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2. How does the Fund operate?

To achieve its objectives, the Pooled Fund focuses on two main areas of work through two funding windows.

The objective of the Pooled Fund's first window is to catalyse more actors to get involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national multi-stakeholder nutrition plans. It finances the involvement of non-governmental actors in multi-stakeholder nutrition platforms.

The beneficiaries of Window 1 grants are registered civil society organizations that are supporting the start-up or expansion of national SUN civil society alliances (CSA), national SUN business networks (SBN) and/or other partner networks so that they can participate in multi-stakeholder platforms (MSP). The grant beneficiaries are then able to speed up progress and contribute to these platforms to improve nutrition.

Some statistics for Window I:

- Since December 2019, the Pooled Fund team has supported 38 national civil society alliances, working with 40 national and international implementing organizations * (some Alliances are supported by several organizations)
- This objective has been achieved through two different calls for proposals.
- The Pooled Fund will add 13 pre-selected entities in 2020 and suggest two additional beneficiaries in 2021, focusing specifically on the national business networks, particularly their coordinating role and their contribution to the joint implementation of national nutrition plans.

The objective of Window II grants is to improve the links with and joint cooperation within the multisectoral / multi-stakeholder platforms nationally and sub-nationally. The grants improve the implementation of multisectoral nutrition activities that can have an impact on nutritional outcomes,



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particularly those of the most vulnerable groups. Projects under this window should aim to transform national and sub-national nutrition policies into concrete actions. Projects must demonstrate innovative decentralized working methods with the potential for replication in other districts / regions.

Projects financed under Window II are associated with capacity strengthening and other learning activities aimed at improving the national capacity of all SUN country stakeholders, including exchanges of experience, training, coaching, etc.

Some statistics for Window II:

- In December 2019 12 projects were allocated through this window.
- Via one round of competitive proposals.
- This phase attracted a large number of applicants.
- The beneficiaries come from United Nations agencies, in partnership with local staff, government bodies who are developing or piloting different MSP projects, and national and international organizations supporting civil society alliances to promote multisectoral interventions.

3. Eligibility and flexibility

The Pooled Fund team launched two calls for proposals in the context of Window I in June 2018 and February 2019 respectively. The aim of the two calls was to support national civil society alliances and their activities and thus improve their participation in the national multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) and ensure a coordinated, aligned and effective national response to malnutrition. The projects included national and/or sub-national activities that the applicants considered realistic according to their context and their organizational capacity.



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The beneficiaries of Window I selected outcomes and activities that fell within the Pooled Fund's results framework.

- Objective 1 (MEAL reference: SMART planning and legislation): SUN programme beneficiary countries have established SMART, costed, multi-stakeholder and multisectoral nutrition plans.
- Objective 2 (MEAL reference: financial resources): national and international resources are mobilized optimally to finance national nutrition plans.
- Objective 3 (MEAL reference: effective implementation and accountability): the SUN countries' CSA is proving to be a good way of implementing nutrition commitments and providing a demonstrable contribution to reducing malnutrition at sub-national level.
- Crosscutting operational activities: these relate particularly to sustainable development, civil society organization mapping and other grassroots activities of CSA members.

4. Lessons learned and quality of submissions and recommendations made by the UNOPS team to the CSOs

The effectiveness of the Pooled Fund and the outcomes of specific grants have not yet been assessed. It is still difficult to say how far the grants have financed interventions that will enable good nutritional outcomes, or whether these outcomes have been clearly achieved.

The Pooled Fund team has, however, prepared a report with information drawn from the first call for proposals and resulting outcomes. A number of salient points emerged from this report, such as:

- The need to reduce some eligibility requirements
- Specifically as regards eligibility: what bodies are eligible? Difficulties related to assumptions as to who is the “president” of the CSA and the relationship with donors (and problems inherent to donors’ letters of support), etc.
- The initial 12-month implementation period was judged too short and was thus extended to 18 months.
- Difficulty in understanding what is meant by fund of last resort
- The need to focus on gender aspects of the proposals
- The subjective nature of some criteria
- Problems related to the request for a letter of support from the SUN Focal Point
- The extension and sustainability of funding for activities was not sufficiently strong for Pooled Fund projects.

5. Civil society actors’ recommendations to UNOPS and future of the Pooled Fund, particularly in relation to Phase 3 of the SUN Movement

The second half of 2020 and, to a large extent, 2021, should be transitional years with a strong focus on consolidation, reflection and a redirection towards the outcomes of the strategic review process and the transition towards Phase 3 of the SUN Movement.

The Pooled Fund team and the SUN Movement Secretariat are focused on organizing and managing the process to ensure that the Pooled Fund is used as effectively as possible to extract and disseminate lessons learned from its Phase 2 activities, reflecting on the country needs that would justify a Pooled Fund mechanism (2020), as well as pilot activities that can begin to guide the Movement towards the stated objectives of the Phase 3.0 strategy (2021).



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We would therefore like to receive recommendations from civil society actors with regard to UNOPS.

In particular, in 2020 and 2021, it will be important to:

1. Determine the extent to which the Pooled Fund is catalysing actions to improve nutrition in the countries, paying particular attention to its contribution to national multi-stakeholder platforms and to improving the sustainability of countries' governance processes and activities.
2. Determine the opportunities and limits of the Pooled Fund in terms of helping to achieve the stated objectives of the Phase 3.0 strategy.
3. With the remaining funds, suggest the piloting of 1 or 2 activities for 2021, in line with the direction of Phase 3.0, and which will be used to explore the feasibility of actions that help to implement the SUN 3.0 vision.
4. Implement the decisions taken with regard to the future of the Pooled Fund.

Conclusions

During consultations with your network, we encourage you not only to give your opinion on SUN Phase 3.0 but also your opinion and comments on the Pooled Fund, even if the questions guiding the consultation do not cover this.

I would therefore encourage you to read the section on the Pooled Fund in the Strategic Review report carefully so that you can give your opinion on this during the session on SUN 3.0 on the last day of the workshop.

It should be recalled that recommendations 38 and 39 of the Strategic Review report focus specifically on the Pooled Fund.



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Questions for the Pooled Fund Discussion(20 mins)

1. What quick evaluation could you make of the Pooled Fund according to your needs? How was it useful to you?

- It has enabled the country to capitalize on the gains and improve those things already in place (particularly by following up the MPTF/NVF). - [Senegal](#).
- It has enabled an increase in the regional and decentralized base (bringing the CSOs further together) by strengthening multisectoral plans at the local level and encouraging greater commitment from local governments and communities, as well as a strengthening of relations between local and international NGOs. - several countries reported this.
- The Pooled Fund's flexibility has enabled activities to be re-oriented when there was a felt need, and this has had a very positive impact in terms of project benefits. The no-cost extension was also greatly appreciated.
- The Fund has enabled a national civil society strategy to be developed.
- The Fund has enabled different actors to be mobilized (artists, champions, media) in support of CS advocacy for nutrition ([Burkina Faso](#)).
- The Fund has enabled the messages of the National Nutrition Security Policy (NNSP) to be disseminated to the regions of Maradi and Zinder. These messages relate to the crosscutting nature of nutrition, ensuring that each sector and area of intervention can help prevent and conquer malnutrition within the country.
- The Fund has enabled the Alliance's operational activities to be revitalized (TUN Niger).
- Lack of transparency in the Fund's management, which was a barrier to achieving several of the objectives previously set (Production of a common CS strategy) (**Question 1**).

2. How could the Pooled Fund support your future needs? Please keep in mind that this is a fund that aims at being catalytic and not sustainable in time.

- There will be a need for “bridging support” to coordinate and initiate future resource mobilization activities so that the gains made are not lost.
- The Pooled Fund must support organizations to be able to mobilize enough sustainable resources to maintain advocacy on nutrition (Niger).
- Access to the Fund needs to be facilitated to local CSOs by setting up a co-payment within projects to be used to support CSOs so that they are able to develop in accordance with their own needs (Cameroon).
- Need for capacity strengthening of Gabonese associations on the Pooled Fund’s logical framework (Gabon).

3. As far as sustainability is concerned, we have noticed several points of view and needs. According to you, should we focus more on institutional sustainability (of the CSOs themselves that are implementing the projects) or on the sustainability of activities? If the latter, how would we measure that?

- The platform decentralization has in itself improved the sustainability of nutrition activities by anchoring them in the right place. It is important to be able to sustain this decentralized base so that the dynamic does not grind to a halt. The institutional sustainability of the civil society alliance is a pre-condition for the sustainability of activities that create an impact and change on the ground.
- The Pooled Fund has enabled co-financing and other catalytic funds to be secured (UN and donors) in [Mali](#), [Madagascar](#) and [Senegal](#).
- The funding has enabled a resource mobilization strategy to be produced ([Madagascar](#)).

- On a case by case basis, both are necessary. Institutional sustainability contributes to the sustainability of activities (Niger and Cameroon).
- Platform decentralization has resulted in improvements in the sustainability of nutrition activities by ensuring that they are anchored in the right place. It is important to sustain this decentralized base (Cameroon).
- It would be good to find financial resources from the other phases of the Pooled Fund to strengthen the gains already made in decentralized multisectoral nutrition governance (Niger).

4. Are you aware of similar funding opportunities to the one offered by the Pooled Fund? Are there any other institutions that fund the actualization of national nutrition plans? What type of funding do you think is necessary in the context of your country?

- The Pooled Fund has enabled heightened awareness of good practice (particularly the good results obtained in UHC) and has thus had a positive influence over the GFF's investment portfolio, particularly with regard to incorporating nutrition into UHC.
- The EU has a CS support programme (PASOC) with implementation capacity.
- Management Sciences for Health for PMNCH and GFF: to improve women's, children's and adolescents' health (WCAH) by supporting civil society engagement, alignment and coordinated action in national processes and programmes - in relation particularly to the GFF ([Burkina Faso, Cambodia](#)) - link: <https://www.msh.org/news-events/stories/annonce-des-r%C3%A9cipiendaires-de-micro-financements-pour-projets-de-plaidoyer-de-la>
- The PAI for Advance Family Planning initiative (AFP): The Opportunity Fund is a flexible source of financing that can be used to advocate for family planning. Run by PAI for Advance Family Planning, this helps CSOs make the most of opportunities and speed up the success of FP2020 and the Ouagadougou Partnership.



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- Amplify change: Four kinds of small grant depending on the organization or size and capacity of the coalition. Most of the grants go to organizations registered in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia: all must benefit the populations of these priority regions.

5. If governments have received funding for a SUN Coordinator or Secretariat, do they have confidence that it can contribute to improve coordination and participation within the multi-stakeholder platform?

- It has improved multisectoral coordination and the mobilization of other funds, particularly for the creation of a business network ([Senegal](#)). Also in Senegal, civil society has mobilized and pooled resources with Canada, UNICEF and the government to strengthen the local authority mobilization and engagement process and improve regional governance for nutrition, incorporating gender.
- The project has enabled greater trust between the government and civil society ([Mali](#)). Civil society is now far more involved and invited to take part as a full player in both joint evaluations and other projects. In [Côte d'Ivoire](#), the CSA has likewise been included in the drafting of the National Plan.
- The Fund has enabled a revival of the platform and a re-operationalization of the executive secretariat team ([Madagascar](#)).
- Overall there have been some good aspects but it remains far too reliant on the initiative of civil society.

Other shared considerations:

- In terms of administration and procedures, there is a real need for a dedicated person who can be more reactive because sometimes the delays are far too long, particularly with regard to payments, and this hinders projects and outcomes.
- There is a felt lack of communication. Acknowledgements of receipt would be useful.
- Huge frustration with Window II and the few projects funded.



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- The donor needs to understand that they cannot impose the same requirements on a minor NGO (associations and other small groups) as on a major one. (Local NGOs have been forced to go through international NGOs to justify their expenditure) - Gabon.
- The audit should not be an initial requirement for small NGOs + The Fund includes an audit line (to pay an audit office for management control) - Gabon.
- Strategic review:
 - o The Pooled Fund should not be used to organize meetings with the private sector.
 - o Concerns raised at the fact that the networks would receive no more funding in the future Pooled Fund projects.
 - o Desire to find financial resources from the other phases of the Pooled Fund to strengthen the gains already made in decentralized multisectoral nutrition governance ([Senegal](#)).