

Action brief

# Use of technology to promote transparency and accountability related to nutrition programmes

Country: Nigeria

Themes: Information systems

Sub-themes: Multisectoral interconnected database

Date: 2023



## Overview



An appraisal tool was developed as part of the Partnership for Improving Nigeria Nutrition Systems Project (2018–2021) to promote transparency and accountability and improve the functionality of the committees responsible for coordinating nutrition in the country. The tool, developed with and owned by the nutrition unit of the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, is used quarterly by Nigerian nutrition line ministries, departments and agencies.

The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Civil Society Network (CSN), aiming to strengthen nutrition systems in line with the objective of the Partnership for Improving Nigeria Nutrition Systems Project (2021–2024), updated and digitized the appraisal tool into a more automated system. The Performance Management System, as it is called,

can now be used remotely, and the system can generate reports to aid the senior management of line ministries, departments and agencies in making decisions to promote nutrition.

The need for the tool was identified during an analysis of the first round of the Partnership for Improving Nigeria Nutrition Systems Project. In reviewing the project, the SUN CSN in Nigeria identified a need to improve the effectiveness of the National Committee on Food and Nutrition and the State Committees on Food and Nutrition in Nigeria.

The CSN offered to provide technical and financial support to strengthen nutrition coordination and improve the effectiveness of the committees, including through the development of the appraisal tool. Specifically, the SUN CSN provided technical and financial support to the Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning for:

- The tool's initial development and then digitization to the Performance Management System
- Capacity-strengthening for members of the food and nutrition committees related to completing and generating reports



→ Setting up the system in the project states (Lagos, Niger, Kaduna, Kano and Nasarawa)

→ Quarterly committee meetings to test the use of the system

The Performance Management System is now used for quarterly assessments within all of the food and nutrition committees. It measures the accountability, effectiveness,

efficiency and nutrition intervention coverage of committees and strengthens overall nutrition coordination.

Specifically, the system is used to collect, store, analyse and report quarterly assessments of the functionality of the committees regarding the implementation of nutrition-specific and sensitive programmes at national and subnational levels.



## Objectives of the action brief

The brief summarizes:

- The digitization of the Performance Management System
- The training of committee members on its use
- System validation, ownership and functionality



## Period covered

The appraisal tool was first developed in 2018 and digitized into the National and State Committees on Food and Nutrition Performance Management System in 2020. The Federal Government of Nigeria formally launched the system in 2022 to commemorate National Nutrition Week..



## What action was taken?

The Government of Nigeria has been implementing a nutrition policy for more than ten years in response to malnutrition crises and direct nutrition initiatives in all line ministries, departments and agencies.

The National Committee on Food and Nutrition and the State Committees on Food and Nutrition coordinate all nutrition programmes and interventions captured in the National Multisectoral Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition, but they needed help to monitor and track progress and ensure its optimal function.

Thus, the Performance Management System was designed to promote accountability, monitor and track critical indicators, and provide quarterly reports on planned interventions.

The system measures the accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and nutrition intervention coverage of the food and nutrition committees, and the reports and scorecards generated by the system are used as evidence to encourage policymakers and legislators to improve the enabling environment for nutrition.

The system is an initiative of the National and State Committees on Food and Nutrition Secretariat within the

Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning. It was supported by the Partnership for Improving Nigeria Nutrition Systems Project and implemented by the SUN CSN in Nigeria, with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Performance Management System is used nationally and within five SUN CSN focal project states. Efforts are being made to scale up its usage to cover all 36 states in the country.

Key features of the system:

- Easy to use and understand
- Automatically generates reports
- Supports both offline and online data collection
- Generates scorecards that promote healthy competition among states and ministries, departments and agencies
- Generates reports that can be used to engage ministries, departments and agencies on improved funding and an enabling environment for programme implementation



## What would the country do differently?

What we would have done differently:

- It would have been helpful to include more implementing partners as the system was designed, as this would have made it easier to scale up to their project states.

### Challenges:

- It was difficult to acquire funding to improve the system design using feedback obtained from testing and to scale up the use of the system in the rest of the country.
- Government bureaucracy constituted a barrier and limiting factor for the effectiveness and utilization of the Performance Management System.
- The technical skills required to manage and maintain the system within the Government were limited.

These challenges were overcome through collaboration with other partners to scale up to the remaining states and to update the system through a new project.



## Adaptation and applicability

- **It is important to support the Government rather than being antagonistic in engaging for change within the Government.**
- **When translating the system to other geographical, social, cultural and political settings, it is important to consider the presence of a multistakeholder platform or nutrition coordination body.**
- **Adequate funding and collaboration will be needed to build, manage and maintain the system.**



## Further information



<https://nscfn.nationalplanning.gov.ng/>



## Next steps

In collaboration with the Government and other partners, the next steps include:

- Regularly updating the system to meet the changing programme and technical environments in the country.
- Scaling up to the remaining states in the country.
- Strengthening capacities within the Government to manage and maintain the system to promote sustainability.
- Strengthening the capacities of new committees to input the required data, generate reports and use them to advocate for improved nutrition programme implementation.



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This Good Practice was developed in collaboration with the SUN Civil Society Network (SUN CSN). For more information about the SUN CSN, please visit their website: <https://www.suncivilsociety.com/>

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