

The background image shows two women in a field of green crops. One woman in the foreground is wearing a colorful headwrap and a patterned dress, leaning over to inspect the plants. Another woman in a yellow and orange patterned dress is standing in the background, also working in the field.

A practical guide for developing a national knowledge management action plan

A focus on knowledge management for SUN countries

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A focus on knowledge management for SUN countries

Managing knowledge entails purposefully creating, gathering, synthesizing, sharing, and using specific insights and experiences to improve ways of working. These insights and experiences can be knowledge embedded in individuals or organizational processes and plans. For the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, knowledge management (KM) is the process of capturing, synthesizing, sharing, and effectively using good practices identified in a context. Additionally, a good practice includes a focus on lessons learned to understand, learn from, and effectively share what did and did not work well in improving nutrition outcomes in a country.

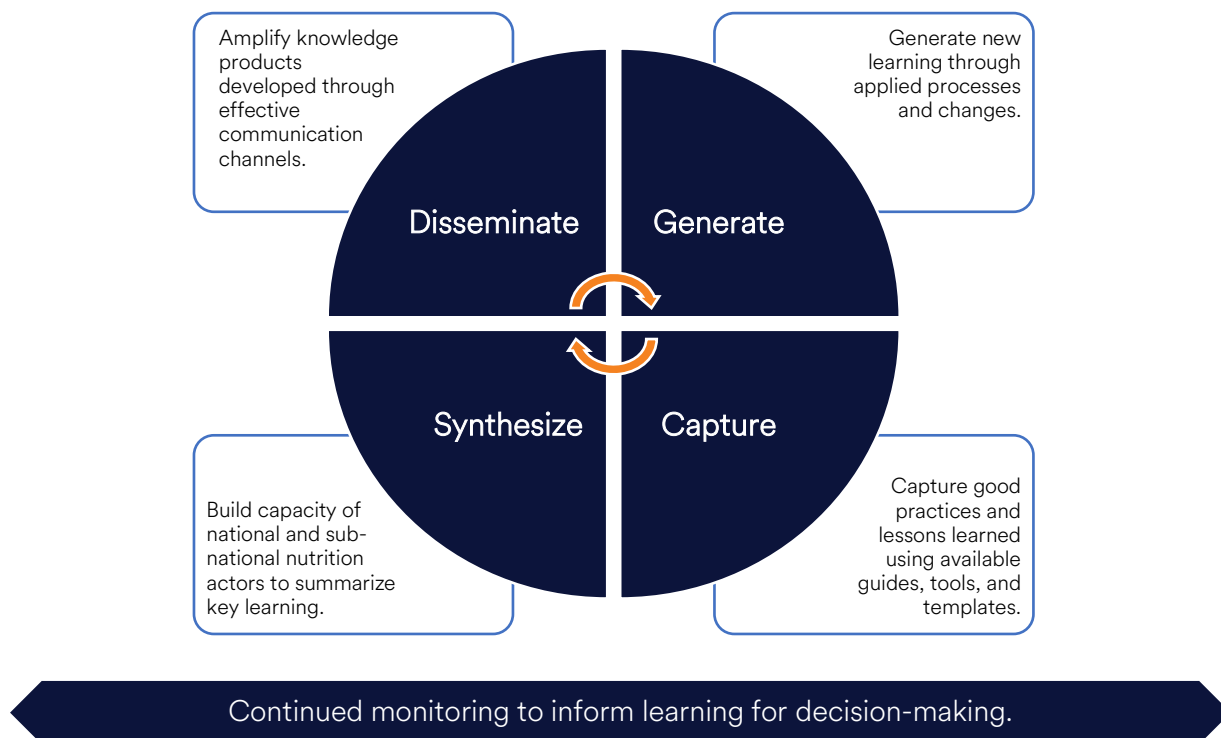
Capturing and sharing lessons learned allows SUN Focal Points, multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) members and nutrition stakeholders to learn from past actions applied within an organization or country context, ensuring efficient use of resources and time. Similarly, a good practice describes successful interventions or actions applied in a context. Documenting successful interventions and lessons learned from implementation is critical to avoid “islands of success” where a good practice is only confined to the area where it was developed (for example, a region, or a country). Within the SUN Movement, good practices and lessons learned are identified, documented and disseminated to:

- Facilitate sharing of information and knowledge between and within countries.
- Encourage countries dealing with a similar challenge to collectively address the issue.
- Promote uptake of local innovations applied in one country or region to another.
- Support peer-to-peer learning and feedback on national and sub-national strategies, policies, plans and approaches on both specific nutrition and sensitive nutrition activities.
- Ensure that global level action is country-led, informed by local good practices.

For knowledge management to be successful, four key elements are essential as captured in Figure 1. These elements are important to understand the human actions that underpin quantitative data.

Incorporating knowledge management approaches in efforts of SUN countries makes the case for nutrition as a sustainable development imperative; highlights effective programmes and policies that could be adapted and emulated by other SUN members; and helps countries prioritize actions. Collecting and sharing knowledge about changes and practices play a key role in the implementation of the SUN vision to reach, by 2030, a world free from malnutrition in all its forms.

Figure 1: Knowledge Management components



Key principles for knowledge management

Several principles underpin the SUN Movement approach to knowledge management. These should be considered in the development of your knowledge management action plan.

- 1. Knowledge is created through reflection and conversation** – Stakeholders in nutrition process the lessons and derive insights about that experience through reflection or conversation with others. Reflection through documentation and conversational approaches are thus needed to facilitate the generation and capture of knowledge. Synthesis of learning is an ongoing task within nutrition improvement efforts. It is therefore critical to ask, “What have we learned to improve these nutrition outcomes?”
- 2. Create knowledge products that convey advice to others** – Deliberately develop a package of information that is designed to convey how to implement successful changes. Knowledge products would include a summary of what was done, how it was done, why it was done, who did it, where it was conducted and what were the outcomes. Given that improving nutrition outcomes often involve many different actors at different levels of the health, agriculture, and development system, it is useful to think of an array of knowledge products. The section on key activities for knowledge management can support in identifying such activities.
- 3. Utilize communication channels to share examples and stories** – In addition to products that convey key learning, it is also helpful to think how communication channels can help to persuade or convince others to adopt new practices. Such communication may complement the knowledge products described above by helping different audiences/levels understand what was done.
- 4. Embed a focus on learning from early on during the design stage** – Learning should be embedded as a key priority for any effort on improving nutrition outcomes. In order to improve, we must learn from what is working and not working. A deliberate and focused effort on learning allows countries to develop tried and tested implementation strategies that can inform policies and action.

Objective of the guide and audience

This practical guide is intended to guide SUN Movement multi-stakeholder platforms and other stakeholders working to develop a national action plan for knowledge management. The guide is intended to be a practical tool. It is not intended to provide a conceptual understanding of knowledge management.

Key activities to consider for knowledge management

1. Identify learning needs and priorities for knowledge management from your national nutrition plans

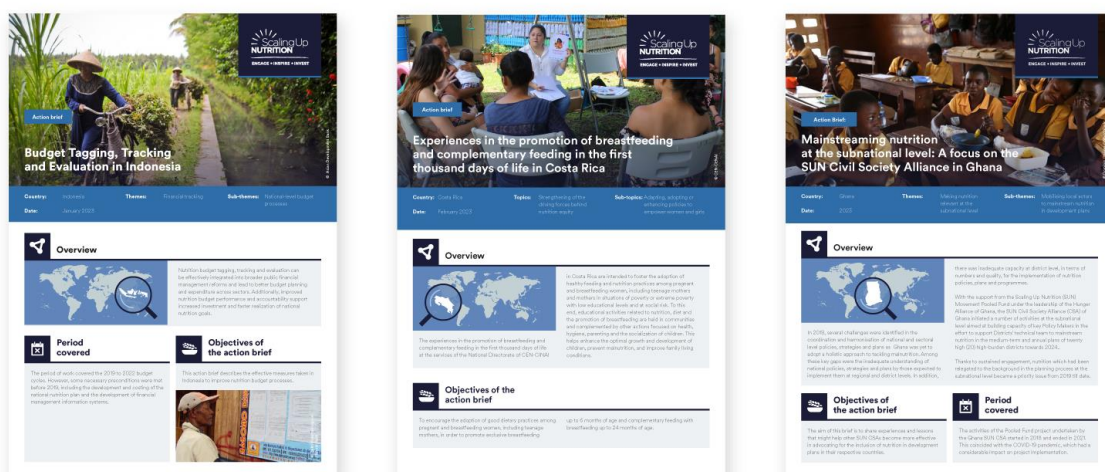
An important part of your knowledge management action plan is to identify your learning needs/priorities informed by your national nutrition plan and ongoing work on nutrition. Based on this initial scoping, outline why you want to focus on knowledge management as part of your nutrition improvement journey in your country. This scoping will help to define your overall rationale and objectives for developing the knowledge management action plan.

2. Undertake scoping at the sub-national and community level

Sustainable changes to improve nutrition outcomes should take a systems-approach, from the national-level, to the sub-national, facility and community-levels. It is essential to understand how learning is documented and disseminated within all levels of the national system. This includes how learning flows horizontally within levels and bi-directionally between levels. For example, between levels, at the national level, national gatherings may be organized on nutrition to identify good practices at the sub-national and community level; at the sub-national level, feedback may be shared with stakeholders based on information captured within any routine information systems and population surveys, and at the facility-level, learning sessions within or between facilities are some examples of identifying knowledge flow in country. Across levels, meetings between stakeholders may be organized to identify and generate new learning.

3. Document good practices and lessons learned using action briefs

A structured 1–2-page brief has been purposefully designed by the SUN Movement for countries to capture actions applied in-country to advance progress towards national nutrition goals and targets. The action briefs encourage countries to reflect on their experiences and trigger a focus on what is working and not working. Further, the action briefs inform peer-to-peer learning, create feedback loops, and facilitate the adaptation of different successful interventions across various contexts. An example template for the SUN movement is reflected in the workbook.



4. Connect people behind the stories through webinars and teleconferences

Periodic virtual moments, also known as webinars, connect the people and voices behind in-country activities and allow for sharing emerging lessons in the field of scaling up nutrition. The webinars focus on shared challenges and the tried solutions, to address the bottlenecks encountered at country-level. Webinars ensure that those with intimate knowledge of applied actions share their experience in a succinct manner.

Webinars can be done virtually online using a platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Alternatively, the use of teleconference software such as voice over internet protocol (including WhatsApp, Sigal and Facebook Messenger etc.) is popular in most countries.

5. Convene people through national or sub-national nutrition gathering or forums

Learning events are in-person or virtual gatherings that bring together people to stimulate thinking on a variety of areas related to scaling up nutrition, share emerging learning from country experiences, spark innovative thinking and doing, and facilitate collective action to shared challenges. Learning events held at the global, regional, or country levels are unique opportunities to identify and share drivers of sustainable change.

National/sub-national (e.g., districts, states, regions etc.) nutrition forums are intended to bring national/sub-national nutrition stakeholders together, building on the architecture of the multi-stakeholder platforms. To increase the visibility of the nutrition agenda and strengthen relationships across sectors, the forum is intended for nutrition, health, development, planning, food systems, and all allied nutrition stakeholders. The nutrition forums are meant for participants to share experiences, learn from each other, and serve as an advocacy mechanism on nutrition. Additionally, the forums are intended to discuss the current state of nutrition, determine priorities for improvement and identify future opportunities to achieve nutrition goals.

6. Build/strengthen national and sub-national capacity in knowledge management

Countries need to build capacity in knowledge management to effectively learn from their actions. The goal is to scale-up efforts on nutrition by developing a culture of continuous learning and identifying practical easy-to-use techniques to achieve and support national nutrition strategic objectives, including through systemic change. The SUN Movement working as one global support system is available to provide capacity strengthening workshops for countries, including national-, sub-national and community levels, once KM needs have been identified.

7. Facilitate knowledge exchange

Knowledge exchange platforms can be hosted at the regional or national level. These platforms facilitate:

- Supporting learning, information exchange, and creating feedback loops within and between countries.
- Creating a safe space for countries to share and strengthen the knowledge base on improvements towards national and global nutrition goals.
- Enabling countries to spark innovative thinking and doing through shared experiences to drive action on scaling up nutrition.
- Challenging ways of working at the global, regional, and country level to strengthen approaches and ways of working.
- Consolidating and maintaining a historical account of progress from SUN Movement countries.

The knowledge exchange platform can be at the national level, with representation from multiple sub-national entities (e.g., districts, states, regions etc.) or regional-level (with representation from countries).

8. Conduct deep dives

Deep dives encourage investigation into mechanisms applied at the country level to facilitate the achievement and drive progress towards national nutrition goals. Deep dives help to capture enabling factors, barriers, and lessons learned on mechanisms applied to advance the nutrition agenda in the country. Deep dives conducted at the national and/or sub-national levels aim to understand the effectiveness and functionality of identified good practices. For example, working with a multi-stakeholder team, a deep-dive exercise can be conducted to understand the functionality and effectiveness of multi-stakeholder coordination platforms.

The central focus of deep dives is to understand why a good practice is working in a particular country. Key informant interviews will be required to understand the peculiarities at country or sub-national level and identify what is specific to and what can be generalized and applied across SUN Movement countries. The outputs (e.g., report) from a deep dive will be shared nationally and globally. An example of past deep-dive reports is reflected [here](#). At the request of and working closely with countries, deep dives can be conducted with the support of the broader SUN Movement stakeholders.

9. Use communications and social media to drive uptake of knowledge management products:

Communications and social media play an important role in uptake and impact of knowledge management. The use of communications channels (such as websites), tools (case studies, briefs, stories etc.) and social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc.) are effective tools to amplify knowledge products.

10. Research/evaluate knowledge effectiveness, use and impact

It is essential to understand the effectiveness and impact of knowledge management on metrics of reach. Activities to consider for effectiveness include hits in different areas of the knowledge database, comments, number, and types of contributions/followers in specific online activities. Activities for knowledge use include quality and quantity of conversations, surveys, interviews. Activities for impact include special studies on the application of KM content, and social network analysis to understand connections and flow of information.



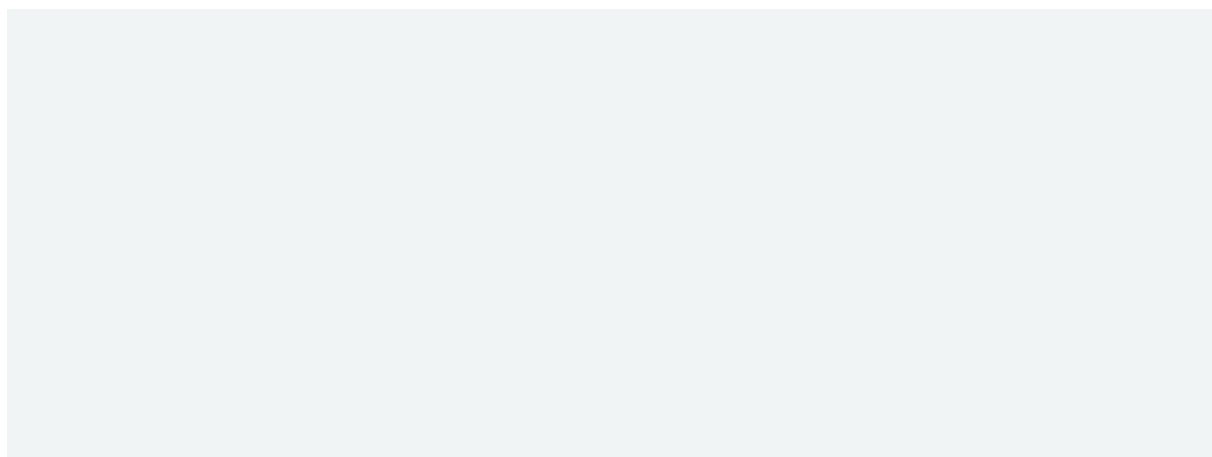
Knowledge Management Action Plan Workbook

This workbook is intended to guide countries develop their knowledge management action plan. Guiding questions have been provided to help countries reflect and document what they want to achieve with the action plan. Countries are encouraged to complete this table working within a multi-stakeholder team or group. After completing this workbook, countries will be better placed to develop a national knowledge management action plan for nutrition.

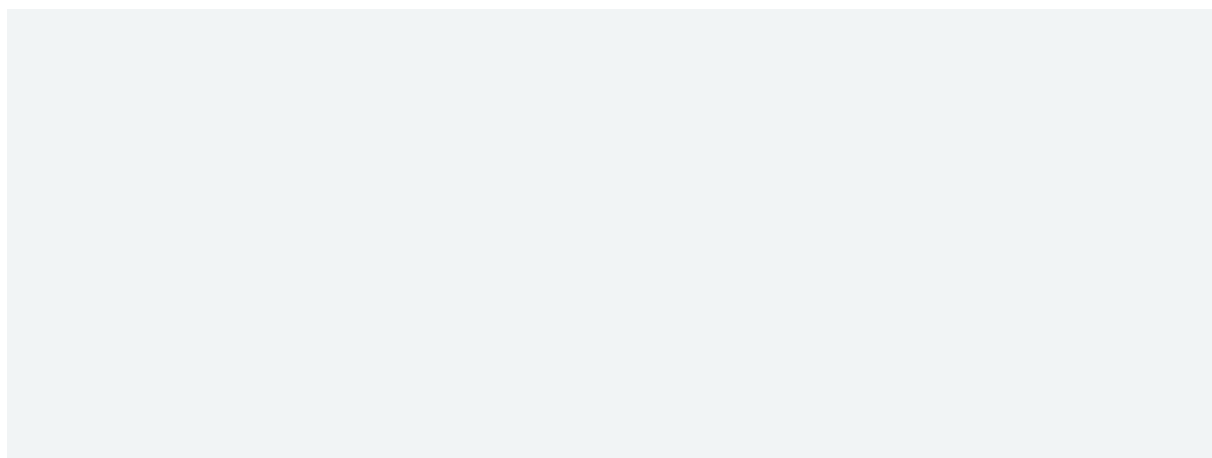
Section 1: Scope

It is important to define the scope of your national KM action plan. This will help to have a shared understanding of why the country is prioritizing a focus on knowledge management as a means to close gaps reported on nutrition. Please use this section to outline: Why is knowledge management important in your country? What is your overall intent or rationale for developing this KM? What is the overall aim you want to achieve? What specific objectives will help you achieve this aim?

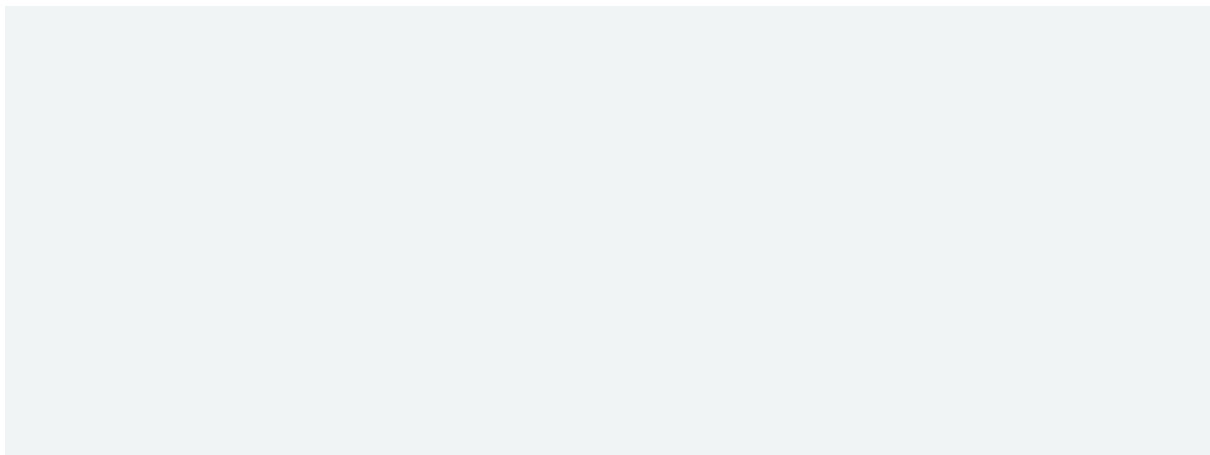
Brief statement on the overall rationale of the national knowledge management action plan?



What is the overall aim you hope to achieve?



What are your specific objectives?



Section 2: Defining activities and flow of knowledge

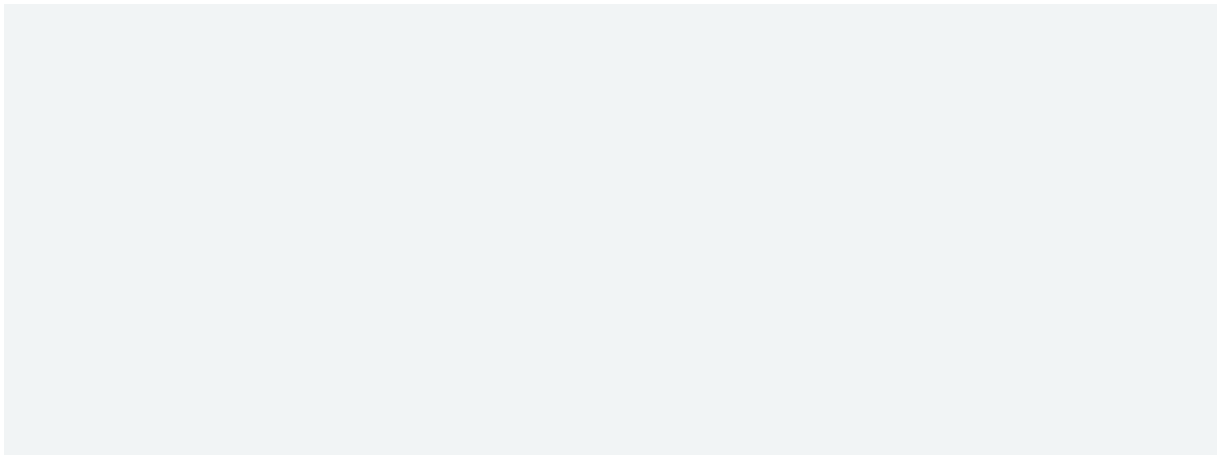
To ensure that we continuously learn from each other at the community, sub-national and national level, we need to identify a set of learning needs that are important to the country. What are the key questions that we want to answer as part of improving nutrition outcomes in the country, in achievement of the national nutrition priorities. What activities will help us address these key questions? How frequently should these activities be undertaken? *What key inputs are required to make this happen?*

Main learning needs/questions and activities

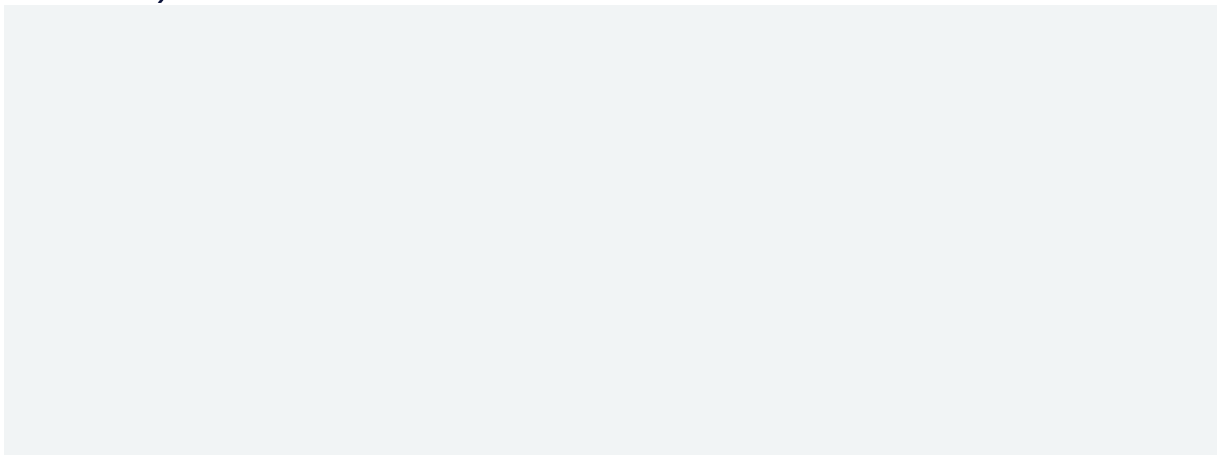
<i>Main learning question/needs</i> <i>Example: As a country, we want to better understand how multi-stakeholder platforms are functioning.</i>	<i>Key activities</i> <i>Example: Conduct a deep-dive with the support of the GSS.</i>	<i>Frequency</i> <i>Example: One deep dive in two years.</i>	<i>Inputs</i> <i>Example: funding to complete a deep-dive.</i>

It is useful to think through how learning and good practices will be identified from the sub-national and community level. SUN Focal Points and MSP teams need to carefully think through how the national level will identify and scale up good practices captured within the country.

Map/Identify how learning from the sub-national and community level will be identified and shared with the national SUN Focal Point/ Multi-stakeholder platforms.



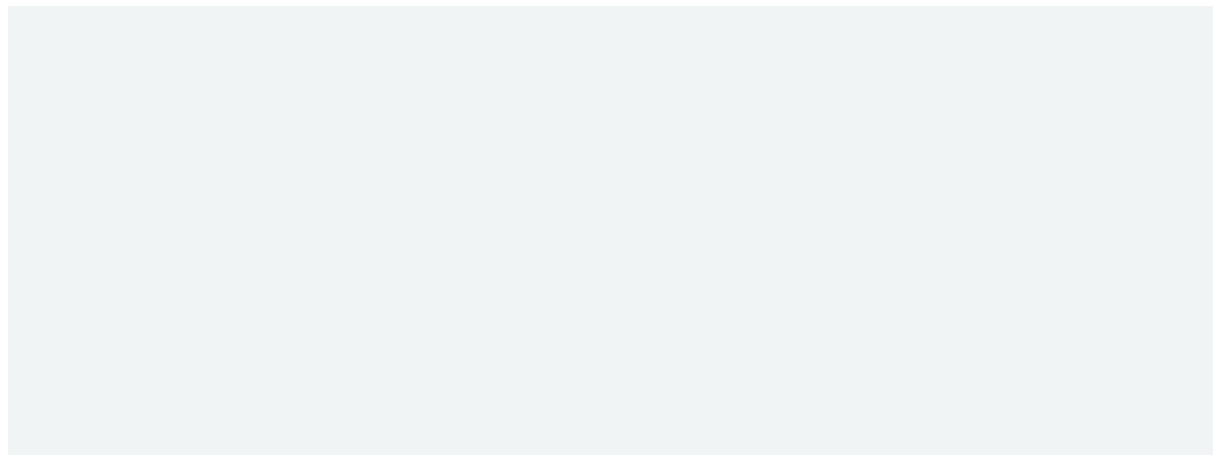
Map/Identify how learning from the national level (SUN Focal Point/ Multi-stakeholder platforms) will be identified and shared with the sub-national and community level.



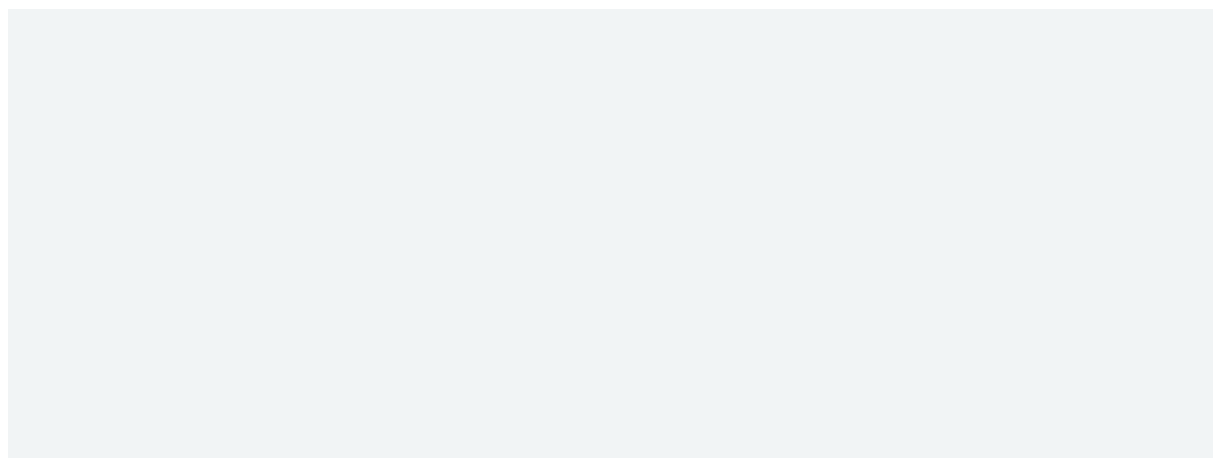
Section 3: Capturing and synthesizing the knowledge

It is important to think through how the learning will be packaged and shared with others to amplify its reach and use within and beyond the country. Some key questions to consider are: What synthesized form will the captured knowledge take (e.g., briefs, videos, podcasts, stories etc.)? How should the learning be communicated and shared (newsletter, social media, webinars, gathering/forum etc.)?

What form will the synthesized knowledge take (e.g. briefs, videos, podcasts, stories etc.)?



How should the learning be communicated and shared (newsletter, social media, webinars, gathering/forum etc.)?



Once key learning needs, activities, flow of knowledge and ways to capture and synthesize the knowledge are captured, it is important to outline the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder at the national level involved in the SUN Movement. Some examples to consider are SUN Focal Points, Country MSP, and national networks. At the global level, it will be important to outline what support may be needed from the Global Support System of SUN Movement (SMS and global networks)

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Potential role in capturing knowledge</i>

Section 4: Tools for capturing and synthesizing knowledge

The SUN Movement has developed a tool to facilitate the documentation of good practices within the Movement. The tool, Good Practices Action Brief, captures good practices from local interventions / action and ways of working in a country that may be adapted for use in other settings. It includes key lessons learned throughout the process. The briefs are 1-2 pages maximum, to allow a focus on the actions that occurred.

Will this template work within your context?

How might you improve the tool?

	<i>Suggested improvements</i>
Themes <i>Provide the sector</i>	
Sub-themes <i>Provide a sub-sector</i>	
Overview <i>-What is the central message?</i> <i>-Why is this area important to be addressed?</i>	

Objectives of the action brief

-What are the objectives of the action brief in 1-2 bullet points

Period covered

-Indicate the timeline during which the activity was conducted

-Explain when it started, outline any context (e.g., COVID-19) - 1 bullet point

What was done?

-Describe the change from what was done before and what is currently being done

-Outline why is it a good practice?

-What is different?

-Describe the story - how did the action emerge, where did it cover (locations – national, sub-national, facility, community, schools etc.), what sectors were involved, and what is the current stage

-Who was involved - who reported it (SUN FP, Network, other), who launched it, who financed it?

-Describe the key lessons learned?

-What was the impact/influence of the initiative?

-To what extent will the results be sustainable?

What would you do differently?

-Describe what you would have done differently?

- What challenges did you encounter and how did you tackle those?

Adaptation and Applicability

-What advice will you give to other countries that want to embark on this journey?

- What factors are essential to consider when translating to different geographical, social, cultural & political settings?

Next steps

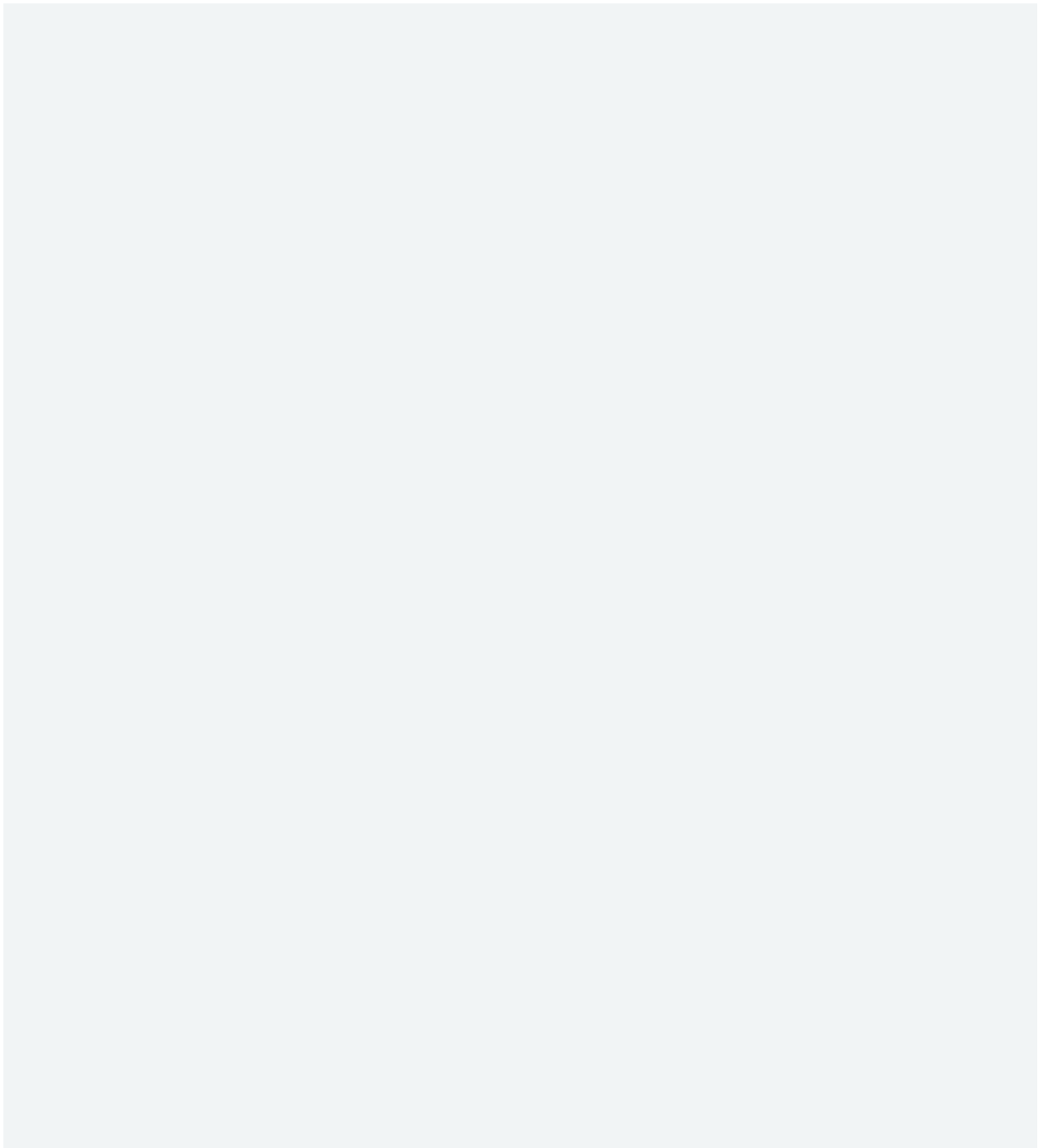
- What steps can you take to advance this area in your country?

Further information

-Provide references/links to useful documents and websites

Are there any other tools that could be used in your content?

Please include the name and link to the tool



References

- Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Strategy 3.0 [2021-2025]
https://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SUN-Strategy-2021-2025_ENG_web1.pdf
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) [Applying Science to Strengthening and Improve Systems Project](#) - unpublished



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