



**FEDERAL MINISTRY OF BUDGET AND ECONOMIC PLANNING**

# Nutrition Multisectoral Coordination Handbook

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## Purpose

This handbook aims to provide practical guidance for strengthening collaboration across various sectors to address malnutrition in Nigeria. It offers insights into the necessary structures, roles, responsibilities, decision-making frameworks, tools, and best practices specifically tailored to Nigeria's nutrition multisectoral coordination at both the federal and state levels. The goal is to foster integrated efforts across sectors such as health, agriculture, education, and social protection to effectively combat malnutrition, which is a multifaceted issue requiring comprehensive and coordinated interventions.

## 1. Introduction

### Why is Multisectoral Coordination Important?

Malnutrition is a complex and persistent issue that cannot be effectively addressed by any single sector alone. While the health sector focuses on treating malnutrition, other factors—such as poor sanitation, inadequate food supply, insufficient education, and limited access to clean water—are often the root causes. In order to create sustainable, long-term solutions, collaboration across sectors is essential. By working together, sectors can:

- **Maximize resources** to achieve a greater impact.
- **Avoid duplicating efforts** and reduce inefficiency.
- **Address systemic barriers** that no single sector can tackle alone.

For example, the health sector may focus on treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM), but the agriculture sector's contribution of improving food security is equally vital to preventing malnutrition in the first place. A multisectoral approach enables a comprehensive, holistic response.

### Existing Frameworks

Nigeria has already established a strong policy framework aimed at addressing malnutrition. The **National Policy on Food and Nutrition (NPFN)** emphasizes the importance of coordination among different sectors. This policy serves as a foundation for collaboration and accountability in addressing nutrition-related issues across the country.

Supporting frameworks include:

- **The National Multisectoral Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition (NMPFAN):** A step-by-step guide to implementing the NPFN.
- **State Nutrition Plans:** Tailored to the unique needs and challenges of each state.

These frameworks provide structure for a unified national strategy, but much of the action must take place at the state and local levels to ensure relevance and responsiveness to local needs.

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## 2. Coordination Structures

### How Does It All Fit Together?

At the national level, the **National Council on Nutrition (NCN)** serves as the highest coordinating body, setting overarching goals and ensuring that all sectors align their strategies with national priorities. The NCN works in collaboration with various sectoral ministries, such as health, agriculture, education, and water resources, which each play a distinct but interconnected role in addressing malnutrition.

The **Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning (FMBEP)** also plays a crucial role by coordinating financial resources, monitoring progress, and evaluating the effectiveness of multisectoral interventions. The FMBEP ensures that adequate resources are allocated to nutrition programs and that they align with the country's broader development goals.

At the state level, **State Committees on Food and Nutrition (SCFN)** serve as the main coordinating bodies. These committees are responsible for adapting national policies and frameworks to suit local contexts and ensuring that local governments are actively involved in program implementation. The SCFNs work to ensure that state-level initiatives align with national strategies and engage a broad range of stakeholders, including local government agencies, civil society organizations, and development partners.

### Sample Terms of Reference (ToR)

A well-defined **Terms of Reference (ToR)** is essential for the smooth functioning of any coordination body. The ToR should clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for all members involved. Common tasks for a coordination body might include:

- Organizing regular intersectoral meetings to discuss progress and challenges.
- Developing advocacy and communication materials to raise awareness and garner support for nutrition programs.
- Monitoring and reporting progress to ensure that actions are taken in a timely and coordinated manner.

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## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

## Who Does What?

Each sector has a unique contribution to make in addressing malnutrition. Below are some of the core responsibilities for each key ministry:

- **Federal Ministry of Health:** Responsible for implementing nutrition specific interventions, including treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM), and preventive health services. The Health Ministry also plays a key role in health education and promoting behavioral changes to improve nutritional habits.
- **Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security:** Ensures food security by promoting the production of diverse and nutritious crops. It supports agricultural practices that improve access to affordable, nutritious food, and encourages sustainable farming practices that ensure long-term food availability.
- **Federal Ministry of Education:** Focuses on strategies that improve the nutritional status of school children, increase school enrollment, enhance retention and completion rates, and ultimately, break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition.
- **Federal Ministry of Water Resources:** Plays a crucial role in preventing waterborne diseases by expanding access to clean water and improving sanitation. Clean water is essential for preventing conditions that exacerbate malnutrition.
- **Federal Ministry of Women Affairs:** The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (FMWA) supports Nigeria's multisectoral nutrition efforts by empowering women, children, and vulnerable groups, integrating gender and nutrition into policies and programs. It promotes women's health, reproductive rights, and economic empowerment to improve access to nutritious food and safeguards children's welfare to combat malnutrition and enhance health outcomes.
- **National Social Safety Nets Program (NASSP):** Aims to prevent intergenerational poverty and enhance economic growth by improving human capital. Through its cash transfer program for poor and vulnerable households, NASSP addresses malnutrition's root causes, mitigates life shocks, and tackles poverty, inequality, and food insecurity.

In addition to government ministries, **development partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs)** have vital roles:

- Providing technical support, such as expert advice on nutrition and program design.
- Offering financial support to fund nutrition programs.
- Training government personnel on nutrition interventions and monitoring techniques.
- Advocating for increased investment in nutrition at the local, state, and federal levels.

## 4. Decision-Making Frameworks

### Building Consensus

Multisectoral coordination often involves navigating complex relationships and managing differing priorities. Consensus-building is therefore a key component of the decision-making process. Here's how to ensure that all sectors stay aligned and collaborate effectively:

1. **Define the Problem Together:** The first step in building consensus is to clearly identify the problem. Stakeholders should agree on the nature of malnutrition, its causes, and the populations most affected.
2. **Set Priorities Collaboratively:** Use decision-making tools such as **decision matrices** to evaluate various interventions. This helps to prioritize actions that are both effective and feasible.
3. **Mediate Conflicts:** Disagreements are natural, but they must be managed constructively. Neutral facilitators can help resolve conflicts and find common ground.

### Decision Matrix Example

Criteria	Weight (%)	Intervention A	Intervention B	Intervention C
Impact on malnutrition	40	High	Medium	Low
Feasibility	30	Medium	High	High
Cost-effectiveness	20	High	Low	Medium
Alignment with policy	10	Medium	High	High
Total	100	85	80	75

This matrix allows stakeholders to assess various interventions based on criteria that are most important to the specific context and goals of the multisectoral plan.

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## 5. Tools for Coordination

Effective coordination requires the use of specific tools and templates to keep meetings, decisions, and actions organized. Below are a few essential tools:

### Meeting Agenda Templates

A well-structured meeting agenda is critical for ensuring that meetings remain focused and productive. Sample agendas include:

## 1. Planning Meeting Agenda

- Opening remarks.
- Objectives and expected outcomes.
- Review of previous action points.
- Progress updates from each sector.
- Identifying bottlenecks and solutions.
- Closing and next steps.

## 2. Review Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and introductions.
- Presentation of achievements.
- Discussion on challenges.
- Adjusting plans as needed.
- Summarizing decisions and assigning follow-up tasks.

## Follow-Up Action Plans

Tracking follow-up actions is crucial for maintaining accountability. The following table provides a template for monitoring progress:

Action Point	Responsible Entity	Deadline	Status
Finalize guidelines	FMBEP	30 days	In Progress
State-level training	SCFN	60 days	Pending
Quarterly reports	All sectors	End of Q1	Completed

This simple tool ensures that tasks are clearly assigned, deadlines are set, and progress is tracked.

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## 6. Challenges and Solutions

### Common Barriers

While multisectoral coordination offers a powerful approach to tackling malnutrition, several challenges can impede progress:

1. **Limited Funding:** Many nutrition programs face budget constraints, limiting their ability to scale or sustain efforts.
2. **Fragmented Efforts:** Stakeholders sometimes work in silos, with limited communication or coordination between sectors.
3. **Data Gaps:** Inconsistent or incomplete data reporting makes it difficult to plan and track the progress of nutrition interventions.

## Overcoming These Challenges

Solutions to these challenges include:

- Advocating for **increased funding** for multisectoral nutrition programs, highlighting their long-term benefits.
- **Aligning all stakeholders** under a single, unified plan to ensure that everyone is working toward common objectives.
- Investing in **robust monitoring systems** that allow for better tracking and reporting of progress.

By identifying common challenges early and putting in place solutions, we can ensure the continued success of multisectoral nutrition coordination.

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## 7. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

### How Do We Measure Success?

To determine whether multisectoral coordination is effectively addressing malnutrition, it is crucial to measure progress through clear indicators:

- Number of multisectoral meetings held.
- Percentage of action points implemented on time.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with coordination efforts.

### Reporting Mechanisms

Regular reporting keeps everyone informed and accountable. Mechanisms include:

- **Quarterly reviews** to assess progress.
  - **Annual stakeholder meetings** to evaluate outcomes and adjust strategies.
  - **Public progress reports** to maintain transparency and accountability to the public and other stakeholders.
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