



Global Support Facility for the National Information Platforms for Nutrition Second meeting of the Expert Advisory Group

GSF-NIPN

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MEETING REPORT

(FINAL VERSION, GSF, 16/07/2018)

Date: 20th – 21st March, 2018

Place: Thon Hotel Stephanie Bristol, Brussels, Belgium

Participants:

From the NIPN Global Support Facility:

- Melanie Broin, Team coordinator
- Julien Chalimbaud, Nutrition expert
- Andrew Hall, Team leader
- Perrine Geniez, Nutrition expert
- Milko Skofic, Data expert

From the EC – DG DEVCO:

- Madeleine Onclin, Head of Sector - Nutrition
- Carla Sorneta, Project manager

From DFID:

- Abigail Perry, Nutrition advisor
- Katja Siling, Project manager

From BMGF:

- Raphael Makonnen, Nutrition advisor

Members of the NIPN Expert Advisory Group:

- Nicolas Bidault, REACH
- Mercedes de Onis, World Health Organization (WHO)
- Edith Feskens, Wageningen University and Research Centre – The Netherlands
- Patrizia Fracassi, Scaling-up Nutrition (SUN)
- Chika Hayashi, UNICEF
- Rebecca Heidkamp, Johns Hopkins University – USA
- Catherine Leclercq, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Jef Leroy, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
- Danka Panchova, *Action Contre la Faim* (ACF)
- David Pelletier, Cornell University – USA
- Jennifer Rosenzweig, World Food Programme (WFP)
- Jillian Waid, Helen Keller International (HKI) – Bangladesh
- Kate Wellard, Natural Resources Institute (NRI) – University of Greenwich – UK

Excused:

- Alan Dangour, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine – UK
- Sandrine Dury, Cirad – France
- Yves Martin-Prével, IRD – France



BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation

INTRODUCTION. SUMMARY OF MAIN OUTPUTS

Five main outputs were expected from the meeting:

1. Guidance for the further development of the NIPN approach and guide to data analysis

During session 4, 8 recommendations were debated.

2. Definition of some ‘quick wins’ that can be achieved in 2018

During session 5 some boundaries were debated for quick wins. There was a consensus around the interest for developing a sub-national nutrition dashboard and about using the LiST tool as potential quick wins. It was also stressed that quick wins should – as much as possible – be part of a process of answering question/addressing a policy need.

3. Highlight main opportunities and challenges for NIPNs to be taken into account in the overall strategy and in the support provided by the GSF for the next project phase

During session 3, the SUN focal points of Guatemala, Niger, Kenya, Zambia and Burkina Faso presented the challenges and opportunities they are facing. The EAG participants also highlighted some challenges and opportunities that are provided in a table in part II-section 7 of this report.

4. Agree on a way to work more closely with members of the EAG on the ‘policy’ and ‘analysis’ elements of NIPN

The opportunity to engage differently with the EAG members has been clearly identified as entering the implementation phase: refer to part I of this report, “the way forward”.

5. Identify upcoming opportunities for meetings of EAG members and NIPN country teams

Some members of the EAG have expressed their willingness to establish ‘peered relationships’ with NIPN at country level or have volunteered to be an ‘ambassador’ to NIPN when they travel to country for their own projects. Though the GSF and experts will need to discuss further how to go about such offer, those propositions are most welcome and will be considered as part of the new ways of working with the EAG: refer to part I of this report, “the way forward”.

The report is organised in two main parts. The first part, “the way forward”, discusses how the main recommendations from the EAG are going to be considered by GSF. The second part follows the agenda of the meeting and summarises the presentations, discussion points and recommendations from EAG members, which are highlighted in blue in each session.

PART I. THE WAY FORWARD

Based on the discussions and recommendations made by the experts in the EAG meeting (see section II of the report), and knowing that a new GSF Team Leader is coming on-board, the following next steps are being proposed:

- The GSF will organise a **2 day “Strategic Meeting” in June**, with the EU and a few experts, to discuss and decide on strategic choices, including a phased approach.
- A **“NIPN Technical Gathering” will be held in Paris on July 3-5** in order to present and review the strategic approach with all the 10 NIPN country teams.
- **The GSF will develop a visual for the operational steps of the NIPN framework, based on the common NIPN logframe.** Following the EAG recommendation of putting more emphasis on the process of “nutrition policy question formulation”, the GSF will produce a more detailed description of the operational steps of a typical NIPN project. It will include a clear step by step approach, with expected achievements and milestones for each step. The GSF will also develop modular guidance notes or tools to support country teams in a number of these operational steps of the cycle.
- **The GSF will elaborate the process to identify policy relevant questions and build the capacity to formulate questions & presenting results.** The GSF will work on those elements as a matter of priority, learning from the NEP project. This topic is also on the agenda of the NIPN Technical Gathering, and part of the list of support tools to be developed. Part of this approach is to provide a solution for how to deal with unanswerable questions or only partially answerable questions. There will be numerous situations where the analysis will produce more questions than answers, which is normal and part of the process to build plausible scenarios, analysis after analysis.
- **The GSF will work with NIPN countries to propose “Quick wins”.** There are quick wins for NIPNs at country level that can be identified. A national or subnational dashboard can be one of them as long as it contributes to either respond or create policy demand. This can be a good option for countries with an existing decentralised policy making process or aiming to strengthen it. The GSF will develop a template for a national and subnational dashboard - building on POSHAN experience - which could offer a starting point for the formulation of questions. Other quick wins (tools or modules) will be identified during the NIPN Technical Gathering, depending on country need and demand. A support tool to guide countries towards ‘simple’ and relevant data analysis will be developed. Additionally, it was reminded that NIPN needs to account for and value the diversity of data at national level, including surveys, routine data, financial data and any other relevant data to answer policy demand.
- **The GSF will develop a knowledge management and learning approach for maximizing the exchange of information between countries and for producing lessons learnt of the NIPN initiative for global knowledge**

This is a result expected from the GSF which has been highlighted as an important component of the project during this EAG meeting. The GSF will bring a consultant on board to help them develop the approach. The need for systematic and regular progress monitoring and how to put this in place will be discussed with countries during the NIPN Technical Gathering in Paris. The GSF will propose an efficient way to capture knowledge and define a learning process.

- **The GSF will propose new ways of working between EAG / GSF / NIPN.** The new GSF Team Leader will engage with EAG members to identify how this pool of expertise can be best put to use for NIPN. This might include the work in sub-groups with expertise on data analysis, on the policy component of NIPN or other topics (such as the development of impact pathways for nutrition sensitive interventions; development or adaptation of existing curriculums). The suggestion of a 'peered relationship' between an EAG member and a specific country is welcome but requires more thought on exact objectives and modalities. These new ways of working need to be formalised, should not overlap, should not be detrimental to the role of the EAG as a whole and to the relation between GSF and country platforms and should have clear objectives.
- **The GSF will need to play a role in coordination & better use of data globally.** The GSF needs to start playing a role to ensure strategic coherence with other data and information umbrellas initiatives and coordinate with other initiatives generating evidence and information (ex: dietary diversity information supported by FAO, the Fill the Nutrient Gap Initiative of WFP; INDDX; INTAKE; FAO/WHO GIFT dissemination platform, etc.). This will help promote/value existing data and information in different fields beyond health. Moreover, the GSF needs to be aware of global initiatives for building the capacity of National Statistical Offices (NSO). The GSF needs to inform NIPN teams at country level, so they have a broad vision of what is globally taking place in the strategic niche of monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) in nutrition and can align their work with what is currently being promoted under the SUN MEAL workstream.
- **Sustainability.** The EAG was concerned by the issue of project sustainability. Several ideas emerged while also keeping in mind the reality of context and of the NIPN implementation at country level. While it may be unrealistic to sustain the NIPN as it is, some key elements of the project can be sustained. Those elements need to be identified so as to be prioritised and ways of sustaining them clarified ahead of time. The platforms should as such be well positioned to capture complementary sources of funding (like small scale operational research) to enlarge their objectives, increase their chances of sustainability and improve impact on policy.
- **Sub National Level.** During this EAG meeting, we discussed about the very interesting potential in some countries such as Guatemala and Zambia to empower the people who collect the data at district level to ensure better analysis and use of information at this level. There is an international move to decentralise the decision making process to lower levels, thus it would be very relevant that the NIPN in countries where they may be this opportunity to seize it. NIPN project in Guatemala includes a pilot in a specific department and region as funding could not allow to cover more. As Zambia project proposal is still under consideration, such opportunity needs to be valued.

PART II. MEETING DISCUSSIONS

1. Welcome address

Madeleine Onclin of the EU welcomed the members of the EAG and thanked them for their presence. She emphasized the need to rethink the role of the GSF – now that the NIPN initiative is fully entering into the implementation phase in 9 countries – especially in relation to ensuring a common strategic direction and overall coordination. She called upon the members of the EAG to make the best use of their presence to provide guidance and recommendations to help the NIPN go further ahead. She reminded that the NIPN initiative is funded by three donors. Abi Perry of DFID acknowledged the continuity from the EAG members in their participation. She highlighted the ambitious nature of the NIPN initiative that provides an opportunity to build the capacity and national institutions in strengthening the data value chain in countries.

2. Session 1: NIPN's progress update

Andrew Hall of the GSF presented the progress achieved by the NIPN initiative so far, globally and in each country. The presentation is provided in appendix 1. A summary report of the main activities and achievements throughout 2017 is provided in appendix 2. The situation in each NIPN country is provided in country sheets in appendix 3. The following issues were raised by EAG members:

- It was argued that the 'offer' from donors in terms of programme does not always fully match country priority needs. Consequently, the process of creating the demand for a programme takes some time and energy, as it has been the case for the NIPN. This is often under-estimated and should be taken into account for future projects.
- The EAG members raised and discussed the importance of setting-up a monitoring system to track NIPN country progress, as entering the implementation phase.
- Some members expressed their interest and willingness to contribute to support the NIPN country level implementation efforts, in particular in countries where experts are already involved through their own projects. The offer may be about establishing a 'peered relationship' with NIPN team at country level and/or about volunteering to be a NIPN 'ambassador' seizing the opportunity of the expert's own monitoring mission to country. This offer was welcome by GSF and will have to be discussed further as part of the new ways of working with the EAG.

3. Session 2 with SUN focal points: countries' perspective

SUN Focal Persons of NIPN countries, who were invited by the EU to attend the nutrition seminar, took the opportunity to present some of the main opportunities and challenges for NIPN implementation in their countries.

- Guatemala: Juan Carlos Carías Estrada, SUN Focal Person from Guatemala, presented the objective of the National Information Platform as a way to strengthen the National Information System on Food and Nutrition Security. The NIPN will promote and strengthen the integration of multisectoral information tools in a single system that is useful for decision makers, with an emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of interventions of the current "national strategy for prevention of chronic malnutrition" (ENPDC). An inter-institutional technical committee, serving as the NIPN advisory committee, works towards the creation of a single integrated information system, which will be accessible through an online platform. The presentation is provided in appendix 4.

- Niger: Nassirou Ousmane, SUN Focal Person from Niger, presented the overarching policy architecture of Niger with the Social and Economic Development Plan (PDES) 2017-2021 and the 3N presidential initiative (HC3N). The National Nutrition Security Policy (PNSN) 2017-2025 and related plans feed into these two overarching documents. The platform institutional set-up respects the mandate/role of key national institutions: the HC3N ensuring the strategic piloting of the NIPN and the National Institute of Statistics responsible for the technical execution. The sectoral Information System Divisions are responsible for the production, treatment and dissemination of information, and the sectoral planning and evaluation divisions for the programming and monitoring of policies and programmes. A multidisciplinary group for orientation and foresight (GPOP) will serve as the NIPN advisory committee: it feeds into the Multisectoral Strategic Committee for Nutrition (CMP4) of the PNSN; it is responsible for identifying information needs. Those include budget analysis of the contribution of the different sectors in the financing of nutrition-specific and sensitive actions, evaluating programme impact, analysis of trends of nutrition indicators at decentralized level. Expectations from the implementation of NIPN also include assessment of data quality, harmonization of data across sectors and support for nutrition sensitive information needs. The presentation is provided in appendix 5.
- Kenya: Gladys Mugambe, SUN Focal Person from Kenya, presented the nutrition governance in Kenya, highlighting the fact that food and nutrition security is high in the political agenda. The multisectoral food and nutrition security strategy has been signed. Governance structures have been defined up to the county level. A bill for the creation of a council for food and nutrition security, run by a secretariat under the Office of the President, has been endorsed by the Parliament and is currently examined by the Senate. The Ministry of planning, through the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, will be responsible for providing information. This component will be strengthened by the NIPN. KNBS will lead a team of technical people, while the strategic coordination of the project will be ensured by a Steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of Planning and co-chaired by the Ministry of Health. A technical committee under this Steering Committee would play the role of the NIPN advisory committee to identify demand for information and generate questions.
- Zambia: Musonda Mofu, SUN Focal Person from Zambia, presented the multisectoral governance of nutrition, with a coordination role played at the national level by the National Food and Nutrition Council and at the sub-national level by the provincial and district nutrition committees. The multisectoral food and nutrition strategy plans for a 'Zambia Nutrition Information System' (ZAMNIS) with a protocol for data elements and a multisector reporting form. Data are collected at the district level and sent to the national level. 15 pilot districts (out of 106) are currently involved in ZAMNIS which will need to be scaled-up. The NIPN will help to make better use of the data collected and aggregated by ZAMNIS.
- Burkina Faso: Ella Compaoré, SUN Focal Person from Burkina Faso, presented the positioning of the NIPN. The strategic leadership of the NIPN lies within the nutrition technical secretariat, newly created and hosted by the Ministry of Health while the technical execution of the NIPN lies within the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD). Since the contract with the EU Delegation has been signed with INSD, the respective role of each organization needs to be clearly spelled out, as implementation is now starting.

4. Session 3: supporting the multi-sectoral coordination efforts in nutrition, where do we stand?

This session focused on the set-up of NIPN Advisory Committee within the overall multi-sectoral governance/coordination system for nutrition, with country examples (Guatemala and Niger, where the government's strategy has offered the opportunity to institutionalise the committee's creation) and discussing way forward of the policy component. The process of institutionalisation took time but is believed to increase the sustainability as the committee becomes part of the national governance for nutrition. Where/when possible, the committees should be constituted in support to the national governance and coordination mechanisms for multisectoral nutrition. The presentation also underlined the potential for support represented by the networks of NIPN policy advisors. In coming months, the GSF plans to engage and support these individuals more systematically so that they can play a facilitation/knowledge brokering role to the national institutions. **The GSF will engage actively with the EAG experts with experience in this area, in particular the experts from Cornell University, SUN and REACH to support this work stream.** As much as possible, this support should align with the work promoted by the SUN Movement, under the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) workstream. The presentation also referred to the three policy studies conducted in Bangladesh, Niger and Uganda which reports can be found at: <http://www.nipn-nutrition-platforms.org/Project-resources>. The full presentation is in appendix 6.

Patrizia Fracassi, Senior Nutrition Analyst and Policy Advisor in the SUN Movement Secretariat, summarized the main issues arising from the presentations of the SUN Focal Persons into four overarching points:

- **The need for a functional coordination of the NIPN, anchored in national nutrition governance structures, to ensure that the platform responds to contextualized needs and support MS efforts on the monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning issues.** The experts recognised that the NIPN made real progress in these areas since the inception period.
- **The need to ensure strategic coherence with other data and information umbrellas initiatives, notably the SDGs.** This also led to a discussion on existing strategies for statistics development which exist in most countries and need to be taken into consideration while engaging with Bureaux of Statistics (example: Paris 21 initiative, the World Bank project on 'Statistics for Results Facility Catalytic Fund' (SRF-CF), the UN Data Revolution, etc.).
- **The data use & maximisation challenge:** data and data sources are much broader than the nutrition outcome indicators and DHS/MICS surveys: questions were raised on how the NIPN will encompass and value this variety of data, including surveys as well as routine data. In addition, suggestions were made to coordinate with other initiatives generating evidence and information (ex: dietary diversity information supported by FAO, the Fill the Nutrient Gap Initiative of WFP, etc.). The NIPN should account as much as possible for the variety of data and information available at country level.
- **The sustainability challenge:** the question of sustainability was raised and it was considered that anchoring NIPN in official structures, institutionalizing NIPNs through legislation, funds allocation by planning ministries, were all ways to increase the likelihood to sustain the NIPNs. Some experts also recognized that the NIPN initiative faces the same limitations and constraints than other centrally funded project. Therefore, expectations over sustainability of the initiative should not be higher for the NIPN than for any other project.

→ Finally, it was concluded that the NIPN role is very much about contributing to a “culture change”: changing the culture for demand and offer vis a vis information and of information use for decision making in nutrition.

5. Session 4: the NIPN data analysis approach

The GSF developed a Data Analysis Guide v1 comprising a catalogue of methods and tools that may be relevant to country needs for analysis and from which they can choose or be inspired when undertaking the analysis. The Guide in its current iteration did not present a strategy or an approach to analysis. Moreover, the Guide is meant to be used once the decision to undertake further analysis is taken. Therefore the process to identify a question, to transform it into specific scientific questions, to conduct a literature review; to decide if further analysis is needed (if data are available); to decide if the analysis should be done internally or through contracted external resources, etc., is still to be described.

The Guide was shared with a smaller group of the EAG members ahead of the meeting for review and comments: the summary of EAG members’ comments are provided in appendix 7, together with a matrix addressing the main comments. All these documents were shared with the small EAG group before the meeting. It served as a basis for a pre-discussion with the group the day before the meeting. **The outcomes of the small group discussions of the 20th of March consisted into a set of recommendations shared and discussed with the full group on the 21st of March. Those are presented below:**

- **The GSF should very strongly focus on the initial steps that are fundamental to occur before conducting any analysis:** the data analysis guide is supporting NIPN once the decision of undertaking further analysis has been taken. The EAG members recommended to focus on the initial step of the process, *before* the decision of undertaking further analysis is taken. Experience from EAG members is showing that the process that we can refer to as “question formulation” to transform a policy question into specific, workable, scientific questions is often challenging and requires well designed support. The GSF should clearly spell out the overall strategy for answering a question. This should include a clear step by step approach. It could come out as lay out of a concise document, identifying what is expected to be achieved and how. In addition, some warnings were made on analysis:
 - Set clear boundaries on what the NIPN can/should not do, e.g. analysis of association should not be promoted (especially to avoid drawing wrong/misleading conclusions from analysis).
 - There might well be questions for which there is no or only partial answer, which is part of the learning process.
 - There is no point in proving things again. Such analysis should only be done if the information is not available elsewhere.
- **This process requires skills that: are not easy to acquire (mainly with experience); may well take years to acquire; are not brought by statisticians.** For example, the audience targeted need to understand the difference between “public health significance” and “statistical significance”. To build this capacity, the GSF should therefore use concrete/real problematic examples to illustrate the possible bias in data analysis.

- **Recognising the need for “quick wins”, more restrictive boundaries can be set at the first stage of the project.** The NIPN could start with questions that are meaningful and feasible. The NIPN needs to know first which questions the data that are available can answer (e.g. bringing data together for a situation analysis, descriptive analysis and triangulation of information through various data sources).
- **The NIPN initiative is a great opportunity to produce data analysis owned by national institutions instead of sub-contracting non-national actors/institutions. The analysis does not necessary need to be complex to be relevant to policy makers and being nationally owned, it can have much higher impact on policy than when sub-contracted.**
- **The GSF should focus on identifying questions first and as matter of priority + Liaise with Nutrition M&E working groups.** It seems timely to start identifying what is the country demand. Liaising with technical working group could be an easy way of doing so.
- **Building district level database takes an incredible amount of time and resources (refer to the NEP experience).** Be realistic: maybe work more towards changing the culture of using data/information within host institutions, rather than looking to sustain/maintain a live database. The NEP created a district level dataset as a mean for a specific data analysis purpose only, not as a standalone objective. In contexts where analytical skills are already available, it may be feasible to create a database but skills are not often lacking.
- **Another key skills to transfer relate to « How to communicate results » : create policy relevant messages; make a good presentation; talk confidently in a simple way.** These skills should not be overlooked and can be quickly productive. Being able to present in a confident way to a high level audience the results of data analysis is a key step to influence policy makers.

6. Session 5: achieving quick wins for NIPNs in 2018

Whatever route is chosen to identify quick wins, the analysis should be rooted in a policy need/demand and feed in the overall goal and skills the NIPN want to develop. Thus, when considering quick wins, the overarching objective of either respond or contribute to create policy demand should be kept.

The GSF should work closely with policy advisors so as to ensure that policy demand at country level is well assessed and understood by the NIPN. This knowledge will contribute to the process of formulating questions and identifying questions the NIPN can answer to respond or create policy demand, as well as guide the identification of quick wins.

The main recommendations from the EAG members were:

- **Start with analysis that is both meaningful and feasible.**
- **Trends analyses are already complex and at times hard to interpret.**
- **One of the principle of NIPN is to use existing data. Making the best out of DHS data can already be a quick win (for example performing trends analyses at regional level), while collecting new data for a quick win can quickly become a rabbit hole.**
- **Sub National Nutrition Dashboard can be a good quick win and can contribute to generate policy questions. Such an option may be relevant for countries where policy demand at decentralised level already exists and/or could be strengthen (notably in Uganda, Zambia,**

Guatemala, or Kenya with the devolution process). The GSF should link with the POSHAN initiative as one added value of the POSHAN is to attach a district level policy brief to the district level nutrition dashboard. Such sub-national dashboards are also good ways to identify data gaps.

- LiST can also be an interesting quick win that stimulates the creation of policy demand. Its limitations (mainly account for nutrition specific interventions beside WASH) were discussed. But NEP experience also showed that it can become a useful exercise to show that ‘nutrition specific’ can’t alone influence/explain stunting, contributing to bring additional sectors on board. It all goes down to how the exercise is framed and taught.

7. Opportunities and Challenges

During the meeting, the EAG members were asked to identify main opportunities and challenges for the NIPN initiative, that are reproduced in the table below. Most of them have been discussed throughout the meeting and are reported along this report.

Opportunities	Challenges
Define a core set of data to collect and review (developing this can support/meet cross-country NIPN needs)	Process important: need to move to content while continuing to ensure optimum governance structures
The EAG has a variety of members, expertise and networks that can be better utilized by the NIPN	How to help countries with sourcing external expertise, is it the role of the GSF?
Rethink interaction & role between EAG, GSF and countries	We discussed a lot of institutional frameworks but little about: which data? What for?
Give feedback to those who collect the data: if they are aware of the key decisions taken based on the data they collect, they will be more motivated to ensure good quality data	Not all useful data can be timely and have national coverage, even if they are information-rich (e.g. food composition data, individual food consumption data)
Linkage with ‘Fill the Nutrient Gap’: lessons on how to facilitate data-driven decision-making	How to ensure a balance of multisectoral skills for analysis (not mostly health)?
Create a decision tree instead of the analysis guide listing 6-8 sources of information/ knowledge to answer various questions	Sustainability of the data analysis process is an issue, especially if ad-hoc analyses are performed
Document learning from NIPN and make model known to the world	Coordinate with other initiatives to reinforce statistical systems
Many activities on nutrition data and many new funding opportunities can be captured by NIPN in countries for co-funding of smaller scale operational research	Deciding when to do data analysis versus other sources of information or knowledge – literature, WHO guidelines, technical assistance, WFP tool
NIPN could take advantage of current work in the area of quantitative individual food consumption survey data: INDDX project & INTAKE initiative (both supported by BMGF), FAO/WHO GIFT dissemination platform	Lack of clarity of the role of the GSF: is capacity building and data analysis the only role? What about working on tools and methods throughout the three phases of the process?
	Sustainability: what is the end point?
	Lack of communication / awareness of multiple initiatives working in parallel
	How eventual interest from other countries will be covered?
	How NIPNs will be technically supported as the GSF funding will finish 2-3 years before the end of contracts in countries?
	Collaboration with sub-national level
	Risk of too much scientific approach: find the good balance between what is needed in practice and too complex analysis

8. Session 6: Wrap-up

Raphael Makonnen, of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, wrapped-up the main outcomes of the discussions throughout the day as follows:

- The ambition of the NIPN initiative is fairly big and it's been a huge task to get the engagement from 10 countries.
- We need a 'demand generation process' to formulate a policy relevant question. This process is complex and long but should not be underestimated, since policy questions should be leading the analysis. The NIPN Technical Gathering could be a critical step for demand generation.
- "Impact pathways" came up all the time during the meeting. There is a need to work on impact pathways with policy makers.
- EAG members who have a particular interest in some NIPN countries could come out and be more involved in the development of the national platform.
- "Don't think your data will answer your question". The scenario where the policy question is too complex to be answered by the available data should be more carefully envisaged. As discussed during this meeting, it is a highly plausible scenario. How do we manage such scenario? This scenario needs to be thought in advance.
- There has been a lot of questions on the topic of sustainability. The question of sustainability remains. The project should primarily work towards changing the culture of using information for decision making rather than towards creating a complex information system or database that will be harder to sustain.
- NIPN countries should not work in silos. The GSF has a role to play for knowledge sharing and for stimulating cross-country collaboration.

List of appendices

Appendix 1: Agenda of the meeting

Appendix 2: Presentation of session 1 on progress achieved so far by the NIPN initiative

Appendix 3: Brief overview of NIPN progress throughout 2017

Appendix 4: Countries sheets on NIPN status

Appendix 5: Presentation of Session 2: Juan Carlos Carías Estrada on NIPN in Guatemala

Appendix 6: Presentation of Session 2: Nassirou Ousamne on NIPN in Niger

Appendix 7: Presentation of session 3

Appendix 8: Review of comments from EAG sub-group on the draft GSF data analysis guide

Appendix 9: Presentation of session 4

Appendix 1: Agenda of the NIPN Expert Advisory Group meeting

Tuesday March 20 th	
16.00-18.00	<p>EAG Data Analysis Sub-group session Preliminary review of the NIPN analysis guide Led by Andrew Hall and Julien Chalimbaud NIPN Global Support Facility</p>
Wednesday March 21 st	
08.30-09.00	<p>Welcome address by Madeleine Onclin, Head of sector Nutrition, European Commission DG DEVCO – Unit Welcome address by Madeleine Onclin C1</p>
09.00-10.00	<p>Session 1: The NIPN initiative: presentation, progress achieved so far and next steps By Andrew Hall, NIPN Global Support Facility <i>Objective: to provide an overview and discuss the development of the NIPN initiative</i></p>
10.00-11.00	<p>Session 2: Countries' perspective on the NIPN: Discussion with SUN Focal Persons from NIPN countries facilitated by Perrine Geniez, NIPN Global support facility <i>Objective: to provide the point of view of SUN focal persons on the main opportunities and challenges of a NIPN in their specific context</i></p>
11.00-11.30	Coffee break
11.30-12.30	<p>Session 3: Where does the initiative stand in supporting the multi-sectoral coordination efforts in nutrition? Country example and lessons learnt from studies by P. Geniez <i>Objective: providing an update on the implementation status of the NIPN advisory committees, discussing challenges ahead and agreeing on the way forward with EAG</i></p>
12.30-14.00	Lunch break
14.00-15.00	<p>Session 4: The data analysis approach promoted by the GSF for the NIPNs By Andrew Hall & Julien Chalimbaud, NIPN Global Support Facility <i>Objective: to clarify the NIPN approach for data analysis, to present and discuss the outputs of the sub-group meeting focusing on evaluating programmes</i></p>
15.00-16.00	<p>Session 5: Working towards achieving quick outputs for NIPNs in 2018 By Andrew Hall <i>Objective: to present and discuss potential sources of information and data and analytical methods to produce quick outputs in NIPN countries in 2018</i></p>
16.00-16.30	Coffee break
16.30-17.30	<p>Session 6: Wrap-up: main opportunities and challenges for NIPNs Facilitated by Raphael Makonnen, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation <i>Objective: to summarize the main opportunities and challenges identified and discuss how the GSF can help build on or address these</i> Conclusion by Andrew Hall</p>