

# NIPN DATA VISUALISATION TOOLS FOR NUTRITION

## TECHNICAL BRIEF

### INTRODUCTION

National Information Platforms for Nutrition (NIPN) is an initiative of the European Commission and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, implemented by the GIZ action area, Capacity for Nutrition-NIPN (C4N-NIPN) to provide support to countries to strengthen their nutrition information systems and to improve the analysis of data to better inform their strategic decision-making to prevent malnutrition and its consequences.

Since the project's start in 2015, data visualisation tools (DVT), such as dashboards and scorecards, have been identified as a powerful approach to

unify fragmented data to better communicate nutrition information to policy makers. They help make sense of complex nutrition questions and facilitate multisectoral coordination, as each ministry can visually observe their contribution and progress on nutrition outcomes. Each NIPN platform developed its own tool with specific objectives, approach, and methodology.

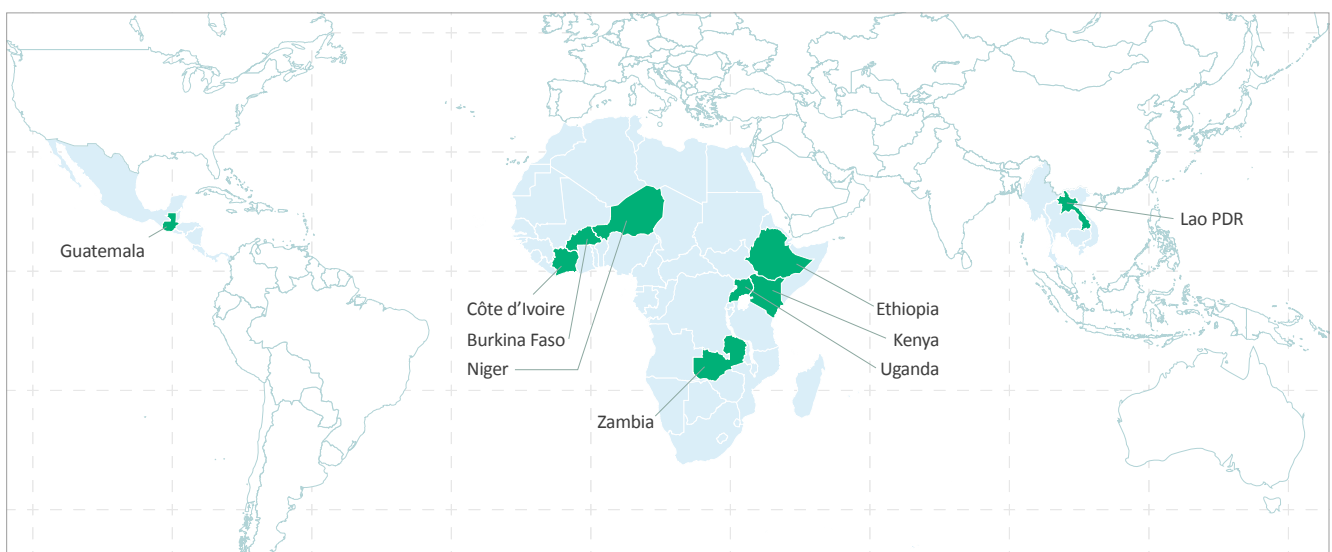
The objective of this technical brief is to provide a summary of the [full DVT review](#), to describe the experiences developing and maintaining DVTs from nearly a decade of implementation across the NIPN platforms.

### METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the DVT review was twofold: desk review and interviews. NIPN Global Coordination team conducted a desk review of the DVTs and existing documentation. Semi structured Interviews were carried out in March to May 2025 with platform coordinators,

technical experts as well as some end users of the DVTs. The interviews focused on objectives of the DVT, coordination with sectors to design the DVT, data collection and management, resources needed, communication and practical use of the DVT.

### NIPN COUNTRIES



## NUTRITION PRIORITIES, DVT PRIORITIES

DVTs which are built on the specific demand of national and sub-national priorities experience greater uptake. There is no one size fits all. The objectives of the DVTs are similar across NIPNs, but content and approach are different as they are each specifically designed to fit with national priorities, demands and the data that is effectively available. DVTs designed for national stakeholders are also different from DVTs designed for sub-national stakeholders. For example, in Kenya,

a dashboard displays national and some district level information and at a more local level, two counties have developed their own dashboards. The DVTs offer clear visuals of the situation in the counties, comparing them also with the national values. These DVTs target county officials who have the mandate to prioritise interventions and can decide on budget allocation in their area; the dashboards help them prioritise interventions in their county.

## CLEAR OBJECTIVES, CLEAR TOOL

When designing a DVT it is important to have a clear, achievable objective for which the tool will serve. It is ambitious to have one DVT that responds to several objectives at the same time. To improve nutrition outcomes in Ethiopia, the government developed a Food and Nutrition Strategy. This Strategy describes the key priorities to prevent and treat malnutrition. In 2023, a national baseline survey was conducted

with a view to monitor progress in implementing the strategy. The NIPN platform in Ethiopia developed a DVT to improve the communication and awareness of the results of the baseline survey. The tool is designed for policy makers engaged in the Food and Nutrition Strategy but also for a broader audience interested in the nutrition situation at sub-national level.

## BUILD ON WHAT EXISTS

Sustaining a DVT requires data updates, and taking decisions requires human and financial resources. This is always a challenge, even when key stakeholders have a strong interest in the DVT. To minimise the demand on resources, the NIPN platforms built their DVTs on existing data infrastructure and processes. For example, in Guatemala, to strengthen the implementation, transparency, and accountability of the Food and Nutrition Assistance Programme, the NIPN platform opted to leverage existing information systems within the two ministries involved, Health and Agriculture, for the DVT development. Each ministry built its own DVT and was accountable to select its priority indicators. This facilitated the

development process, reduced costs, and improved ownership. The Ministry of Health built upon a tool that was already used within their ministry. The data mapping exercise conducted in Phase I facilitated much of the design of the tool and the selection of key indicators. The data quality control is implemented by another government organisation following ISO 8000 international norms that are used across government institutions, while the NIPN platform supports the ministry harmonise indicators. Overall, the development of the DVT involved statisticians, IT experts, and technical teams from within the ministries; what makes it unique is that the knowledge and technical expertise remain in house.

## USER EXPERIENCE MATTERS

Experiences from Sierra Leone show that the quality of the visuals, interactive nature, and data quality are essential for users to keep their interest. The Government of Sierra Leone recently developed a nutrition information management system that includes 4 DVTs. One of the tools is a scorecard that monitors progress of key indicators of the Multisectoral Strategic Plan for Nutrition (MSP). Sierra Leone's

DVT classifies government priorities, covering 13 strategic areas, and over 150 indicators that are easily navigable. The objective is centrally presented so the user immediately understands the context of the tool. Visual elements are clearly structured, for instance a colour code indicates whether the MSP target is met, in green, or not met, in red.

## CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Continuous implementation of capacity development and communication activities on the DVTs are needed to reach national and sub-national target audiences to mitigate institutional knowledge loss with staff turnover. The NIPN platform in Lao PDR conducted trainings of staff at the Lao Statistic Bureau on management of data servers, cyber security, and management of dashboards. The

dashboards were deployed province by province with practical training, helping staff in utilising and understanding how the tool can support their work. In Burkina Faso, a training of trainers' approach from the national to the sub-national was also used to improve the capacity of stakeholders to use the DVT. This enabled the cascading of training to reach all 13 regions of the country.

## REINFORCE COORDINATION

DVTs are dependent on coordination across ministries while also acting as a powerful tool to reinforce multisectoral coordination. In Côte d'Ivoire, the DVT provides updates on the implementation of the

National Plan of Action for Nutrition. It is used during the quarterly multisectoral nutrition coordination meetings and to inform the design of the new multisectoral strategy.

## CONCLUSION

There is a high demand from national stakeholders to develop and maintain NIPN DVTs. DVTs are useful to have a multisectoral overview of the nutrition situation. DVTs are also valuable to provide an update to each sector on their contribution to the national multisectoral plan for nutrition which is critical to maintain the dialogue and multisectoral collaboration. There is also a high and specific demand from sub-national stakeholders especially in decentralised countries. Having DVTs specifically designed for sub-national stakeholders is increasingly important.

This review demonstrates that approaches can vary, depending on local expertise, financial and time resources (e.g. the pre-existence of a national statistical website, etc.), but the objective and end-products are very similar: to have nutritional data more readily available to decision makers and experts through practical and interactive visuals. The resources invested were limited and perceived as reasonable for such an important goal. Governments and national institutions should be encouraged to maintain the tools long-term and the national expertise developed throughout the lifespan of the NIPN project will be instrumental for this.

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