



On the Journey to Self-Reliance: Transitioning Nutrition Financing from USAID to Domestic Resources

Guidance for USAID Missions and Implementing Partners

August 27, 2020



What to expect at today's webinar?

Agenda:

- Overview of sustainable financing for nutrition and approach
- Framework for financing transitions for USAID nutrition activities
- Recommendations on incorporating sustainable financing considerations
- Poll questions for the audience after each recommendation
- Discussion on applying the recommendations to different contexts
- Questions from the audience

Ground rules:

1. Please keep yourself muted throughout the webinar.
2. For technical difficulties, please write in the chat box.
3. Ask your questions in the chat box. Some will be addressed at the end of the presentations.





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Overview and approach

What is the rationale for focusing on sustainable financing for nutrition?

What is sustainable financing for nutrition?

- Sustainable financing for nutrition occurs when nutrition activities are incorporated into **government-managed budgets** and backed by **predictable financing from domestic revenues**.



Created by Tiff Teerick
from Nourish Project

Why should USAID care about sustainable financing for nutrition?

- Governments are faced with decisions on **planning, budgeting, and implementing nutrition interventions** in the context of the overall budget.
- Due to the multi-sectoral nature of nutrition, funding has typically been managed by a **multitude of ministries**.
- USAID's vision – the **Journey to Self-Reliance** – requires priorities to be aligned with country objectives and be built around sustainability.
- This requires:
 - **strong systems** to mobilize, allocate, and spend resources in an effective, equitable, and accountable manner.
 - programs and activities to be **designed with the overall fiscal environment** in mind.

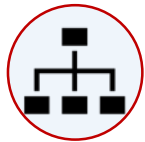


Created by Adrian Coquet
from Nourish Project

To transition nutrition programs over to the government, **USAID** needs to:



Ensure programs and activities are **fully aligned with the government priorities and plans**



Understand the **planning and budgeting framework of governments**



Understand **planning around off-budget activities**



Identify strategic entry points in the process to support governments

Recommendations for USAID to incorporate sustainable financing considerations into nutrition plans and programming

Activity Design and Implementation



- 1 Work in concert with governments to **develop a transparent, achievable, long-term transition plan for sustainability**



- 2 Work with governments to **strategically plan for implementation in accordance with cyclical government processes** and in alignment with the long-term transition plan

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning



- 3 Ensure **transparent and shared data, monitoring, evaluation, and learnings** for the activity, interventions, and the transition

Three activities were conducted to develop the guidance on sustainable financing for nutrition:



Framework development

- 1 Reviewed frameworks for **national planning and budget cycles for nutrition** and other relevant sectors and the **USAID program cycle** to develop the sustainable **financing framework for USAID nutrition planning and program cycle**.
- 2 Consulted with experts across organizations including USAID and SUN Secretariat to refine the framework.



Literature review

- 1 Analyzed **peer-reviewed** and **grey literature** on **sustainable financing** and **donor transitions**.
- 2 Focused primarily on **global health sector** but included nutrition and agriculture as sources were available.



Case examples

- 1 Conducted a **desk review of activity documents** from current and recent USAID nutrition activities
- 2 Interviewed activity staff, USAID staff, and government counterparts on **examples of transition and sustainable financing** from these activities.

We explored five USAID-funded activities with strong nutrition components to learn about their experiences and lessons learned around transitioning interventions to government plans and budgets. The case examples are a) Suaahara II in Nepal, b) Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING), c) Lishe Endelevu in Tanzania, d) SHOUHARDO III in Bangladesh, and e) Nobo Jatra in Bangladesh. These activities capture experiences across a range of countries, USAID Bureaus, points in activity lifecycles, and transition goals and strategies.

Presenter: Helen Connolly



Helen Connolly, PhD, is a Principal Economist at AIR and has more than 30 years of experience in economic research and evaluation and has supported projects across the globe. She is experienced in methodologies of the evaluation of health, nutrition, income, gender equality, and poverty. She has worked with country governments and with USAID, UNICEF, World Bank, and SUN in developing national nutrition plans and supporting improvements in public finance for nutrition (PF4N).



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Framework for Financing Transitions for USAID Nutrition Activities

Scaling Up Nutrition(SUN) movement offers a National Planning, and Budget Cycle framework for nutrition programs



- Each of the steps identified by SUN are recommended for **the national budget cycle** to be **well-planned, executed, and accountable**.
- Donors and partners should target and modify their strategies and activities to **better align with the government planning cycle** to reinforce the sustainability of programs.
- It is also important for donors to keep in mind and address:
 - Level and types of **decentralization**, across sectors
 - **Fiscal space** and budgetary room for nutrition

Note: Figure adapted from Scaling Up Nutrition National Planning and Budget Cycle framework.

Feasible entry points for USAID to support country governments through the sustainable financing framework for nutrition



- Evidence from USAID programs should feed into **new government policy agendas** and **align with the strategic planning in country**
- **Sharing results from monitoring, evaluation, research and learning of programs can promote government take-up of effective programs**
- Activities should be designed to **address knowledge gaps** and **strengthen the evidence base** to feed back into planning

Note: Framework aligns the Scaling Up Nutrition National Planning and Budget Cycle steps with the USAID planning cycle to link USAID planning to domestic cycles.



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Key Findings and Recommendations

Commitment to sustainable financing requires capacity assessment and development across the agency



Shared understanding of goals and processes.

Two phases of the USAID program cycle were identified as feasible and strategic points for USAID to support governments and incorporate sustainable financing considerations:

- 1) Activity Design and Implementation**
- 2) Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning**

Work in concert with governments to develop a transparent, achievable, long-term transition plan for sustainability

Relevant steps and considerations:




Develop transition plans

- i. Agree on an actionable definition of and goals for sustainability and transition of nutrition interventions
- ii. Assess achievability of goals
- iii. Establish a realistic timeline
- iv. Determine agreed-upon benchmarks with an estimated timeframe
- v. Identify capacity development needed for successful transitioning of nutrition activities
- vi. Account for costs and staffing requirements to manage and facilitate the transition process in nutrition activity budgets and workplans (USAID and domestic)

Case example: Lessons shared from the RING activity in Ghana

Context: RING **worked closely with the government** throughout the activity to **implement interventions** and try to ensure that the government would continue after the activity ended.

Lessons Learned:

-  **Engaging** the government from the **beginning was critical**.
-  **Use government reporting systems** and data as much as possible to improve government uptake and ownership.
-  **Assessing government readiness for transition** and addressing weaknesses is important for success. RING found that district staff capacity was not a significant issue, but rather governance and accountability systems needed to be improved to increase accountability, transparency, and staff performance.

Work in concert with governments to strategically plan for implementation in accordance with cyclical government processes and in alignment with the long-term transition plan

Relevant steps and considerations:







- i. Transitioning intervention implementation and funding should happen at the appropriate level of government and stakeholder decision-making and in a well-planned, well-timed manner throughout the transition
- ii. Thoughtful systems strengthening and capacity building should be advanced in each cycle
- iii. Recognize that local ownership of nutrition activities needs local branding – secure rights to co-brand from the start
- iv. Maintain engagement with government and partners throughout the transition process



Case example: Lessons shared from the Suaahara II activity in Nepal

Context: Suaahara II, and Suaahara I before it, **supported the government** in **implementing** its **multi-sectoral nutrition plan**.

Lessons Learned:

-  **Aligning activities to the government** helps to garner support from the government.
-  **Openly communicating with the government** on plans and challenges is important.
-  Activity needs to be **flexible** as challenges arise and contexts change (e.g., natural disasters, decentralization).
-  **Systematic approach** to **coordination**, beyond meetings, is important.
-  Pushing for **improved governance and accountability** is needed to encourage equal partnership.
-  Building **government capacity to spend allocated nutrition funding** is needed to support implementation of nutrition activities.

Ensure transparent and shared data, monitoring, evaluation and learnings for the activity, interventions, and the transition

Relevant steps and considerations:

- i. It is important to monitor and evaluate the nutrition intervention to ensure outputs and outcomes continue at a high level throughout the transition
- ii. The transition process and determined benchmarks also need to be monitored and evaluated, and the course adjusted as necessary

Discussant #1: Tomas Lievens



Tomas Lievens, is an experienced social policy economist with expertise in quantitative research and mixed research methods, health and nutrition, education and WASH financing, health insurance, as well as education and health labor markets. Much of his work focuses on public systems and expenditure performance with a special interest in equity in financing and outcomes. He is the Partner in charge of the recently established Human Development Practice at Genesis Analytics.

Discussant #2: Debora Niyeha



Debora Niyeha, Chief of Party for USAID Advancing Nutrition in Tanzania. Debora worked with Institute for International Program at Johns Hopkins University as Resident Advisor for National Evaluation Platform. Debora has also worked with World Vision Tanzania as National Nutrition Coordinator for over 7 years. She possesses 13 years' experience in program implementation, management, and oversight specifically in areas of Health and Nutrition, Food Security, Food fortification and Large-scale Evaluation of Health and Nutrition Policies and Programs



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Thank you! We will now begin the Q&A.

 **Thank you for joining the webinar. We'd appreciate hearing more on your experience with sustainable financing for nutrition.**

Let us know in the survey question below:

What additional information or support do you need to make these recommendations actionable?

Contact us at:

info@advancingnutrition.org



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