

PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE NUTRITION FINANCING

Islamabad, Pakistan

October 30-31, 2024

Workshop Summary Report

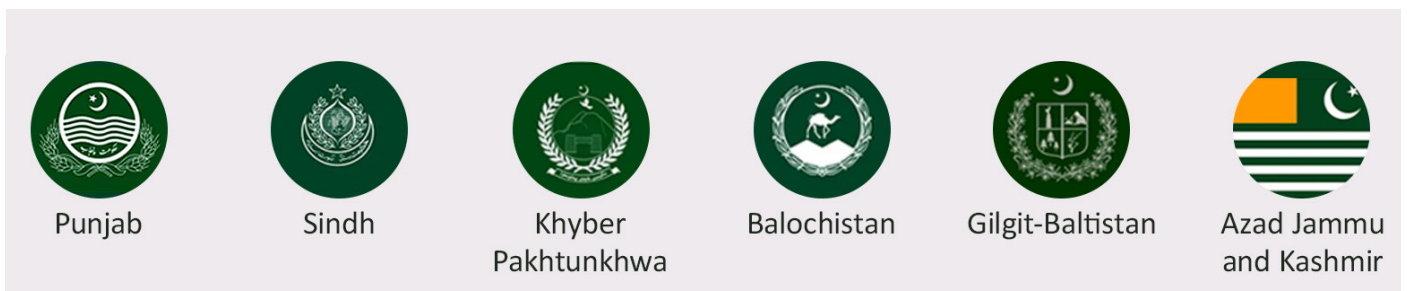
BACKGROUND

Pakistan has made notable strides in prioritizing nutrition in its development agenda, yet significant financing gaps persist, hindering the ability to scale sustainable solutions. The SUN 3.0 strategy has mobilized diverse support and galvanized national action to address financing challenges, emphasizing the integration of innovative financing solutions into national development plans and budgets. In this context, the SUN Movement Secretariat Pakistan under the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MoPD&SI), in collaboration with CERP and supported by the Finance Capacity Development Platform (FCDP) and Results for Development (R4D), organized a workshop to accelerate and enhance provincial and regional efforts to scale up nutrition financing.



Workshop Participants (Day 1)

PROVINCES & REGIONS



During the two-day nutrition financing workshop, over fifty participants from 4 provinces (Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh) and 2 regions (Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit–Baltistan) and the capital gathered to discuss core issues in nutrition financing. The attendees included the SUN Focal Point, Deputy Secretary from the Ministry of Finance, provincial members from the MoPD&SI, representatives from the SUN Civil Society Network (CSA), UN agencies and other technical/academia partners (Aga Khan University, GAIN, GIZ, Helvetas, Nutrition International, World Bank, World Food Programme and others) involved in supporting the nutrition financing processes in each province. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- 01 Share approaches to increase nutrition financing and strengthen financial management systems.
- 02 Identify priority sources of financing for nutrition and resource mobilization opportunities.
- 03 Build consensus on a comprehensive vision of success for sustainable nutrition financing.

The preparatory process for the workshop involved a pre-workshop meeting on August 22, 2024, where the SUN Movement Pakistan convened nutrition stakeholders from across provinces to discuss sustainable financing for achieving national nutrition goals.

The meeting unpacked common challenges in financing nutrition programs and identified priority areas for the main workshop. This was followed by a regional workshop organized by the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS) Asia Hub from August 27th-30th, 2024, which brought together representatives from 10 SUN countries to accelerate efforts in scaling up nutrition financing. During this workshop, SUN Movement Pakistan outlined its vision for achieving sustainable nutrition financing nationwide. This information helped provide a better understanding of the financial landscape for nutrition across Pakistan and informed the province-specific worksheets for group work sessions and plenary discussions.



The workshop began with an overview of nutrition financing in Pakistan and the Pakistan Nutrition Initiative (PANI), by the Chief Nutrition and SUN Focal Point (Dr. Nazeer Ahmed), followed by technical presentations from partners and the Federal Government, including the Ministry of Finance (Ayesha Javed), FCDP/R4D representatives (Abbe McCarter, Danielle Harris, Omar Khan), and CERP (Imran Zia), with plenary and working group sessions facilitated by CERP (Imran Zia, Fauzia Waqar,

Anum Irfan, Lutfullah Khan) and R4D. Closing remarks were presented by the Member for Food Security and Climate Change on the Planning Commission (Nadia Rehman) at the end of Day 2. During each working group session, provincial and regional teams participated in a hands-on review on the nutrition financing landscapes of their province, using practical worksheets that covered the five key components of sustainable nutrition financing:

- 1 Setting the Scene and Policy Foundations
- 2 Mainstreaming Nutrition within Annual Planning & Budgeting
- 3 External Resource Mobilization
- 4 Multi-sectoral Governance & Monitoring
- 5 Calls to Action & Vision of Success

CHALLENGES

The workshop highlighted several cross-cutting challenges that hinder progress in scaling sustainable nutrition financing:

- 1. Deprioritization of Nutrition:** Nutrition continues to be undervalued by key policy and decision-makers, limiting its integration into broader development agendas.
- 2. Delayed Funding Disbursements:** Frequent delays in fund releases at both federal and provincial levels disrupt program implementation. Inadequate monitoring further exacerbates this issue.
- 3. Fragmented Financing Mechanisms:** Limited fiscal space and inconsistent localization of financing frameworks impede resource mobilization and utilization (e.g., top-down approach adapted for funds disbursement).
- 4. Policy and Framework Gaps:** The absence of comprehensive, multi-sectoral nutrition frameworks and weak intersectoral coordination at the provincial level restricts effective planning, budgeting, and leads to duplication of nutrition activities.
- 5. Insufficient and Disconnected External Financing:** Limited external financing, coupled with a lack of coordination among donors, hampers the ability to fill critical funding gaps and align resources with national priorities.

The insights gained during the workshop provided pathways to address these barriers and mainstream nutrition financing within Pakistan's broader development agenda.

KEY LEARNINGS & INSIGHTS

Based on technical presentations and group discussions, this section highlights actionable insights that address the identified barriers, emphasizing a forward-looking and practical approach to advancing sustainable progress.

1. Sensitization of Parliamentarians, budget holders and decision-makers on the importance of investing in nutrition and the highest impact investments to boost nutrition gains is needed to secure the political will to advance nutrition goals at the federal and provincial levels.

- Deprioritization of nutrition, in the face of competing priorities, is a major hindrance to financing and implementing nutrition programs at the federal and provincial levels. Sensitizing Parliamentarians and budget holders on the investment case for nutrition, including the return on investment for funding nutrition, the cost of not investing in nutrition, and guidance for sectoral ‘best buy’ nutrition interventions, is an important step. This targeted advocacy and outreach will encourage Parliamentarians and other stakeholders to invest in nutrition. The process must ultimately be led and endorsed by key decisions and policymakers at the federal and provincial levels to inform annual planning and budgeting.

2. A provincial system to tag and track nutrition expenditures is necessary to understand the nutrition financing gaps and strengthen accountability systems.

- Provinces have made significant progress in tracking nutrition allocations. Spearheaded by SUN PK, several provinces have undertaken steps to catalog nutrition investments in their annual development plans (ADPs). As a result, information about nutrition allocations is readily available. However, because nutrition expenditures are not similarly tracked, the amount of funding that is disbursed and spent on nutrition programs is unknown. An expenditure-based tracking system should be developed and implemented across all provinces to increase accountability. Expenditure tracking and analysis on expenditure performance will help inform planning for the next year to ensure adequate and more strategic use of funding. The development of this system should be informed by existing budget tagging efforts and be linked with performance management systems.

3. Capacity building for nutrition-related public financial management among relevant provincial employees.

- Workshop attendees highlighted that all the improvements to the nutrition financing system and its enabling environment discussed in the previous key learnings and insights would not be possible or effective without adequate training on implementing nutrition-related public financial management systems for key provincial staff members.

4. Strong nutrition governance structures and multi-sectoral coordination among relevant stakeholders are required to sustainably finance and implement nutrition programs.

- At the provincial level, developing or strengthening governance structures for nutrition, where roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, will increase ownership and coordination for sustainable financing and implementation of nutrition programs. Strong governance structures will also help to minimize disruptions to funding and programming due to personnel or leadership changes.

5. A comprehensive plan for provincial nutrition resource mobilization including domestic, external, and new and innovative financing sources will reduce fragmentation.

- All the challenges described above – deprioritization of nutrition, a lack of information about financing gaps, and poor coordination among stakeholders – result in a lack of coordinated and sustained nutrition financing at the provincial level. Provinces are eager to implement impactful nutrition programs but need resources to do so. The development of a comprehensive resource mobilization plan for nutrition including domestic, external, and innovative sources, and aligning it with federal and provincial priorities and plans is necessary. Within these plans, provinces can outline their efforts to secure new, diverse and/or innovative financing for nutrition. In the absence of resource coordination, provinces miss out on synergistic opportunities to incorporate or support nutrition objectives in existing programs (e.g., in safe water or school feeding programs).

NEXT STEPS FOR PROVINCES & WAY FORWARD

Provinces are at different stages in addressing nutrition financing challenges. While bridging substantial financing gaps may seem daunting, this workshop laid the groundwork for actionable steps toward institutionalizing sustainable nutrition financing. Provinces/regions will build on the following key actions to drive progress:

- **Validating Recommendations:** Provinces will refine and assess the applicability of recommendations shared during the workshop, aligning them with local priorities. Updates will be shared on priority areas, including mainstreaming nutrition in annual budgets, external resource mobilization, and monitoring systems.
- **Action Plans:** Each province/region developed action plans with clear next steps for sustainable nutrition financing, which they will now take forward and will be used to track progress.

These efforts lay the groundwork for sustained dialogue and collaboration among provinces, national stakeholders, and technical partners. By aligning action plans with national priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provinces aim to strengthen Pakistan’s nutrition financing landscape. This progress positions Pakistan to showcase its advancements at global platforms like the **Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit 2025** and the **SUN Global Gathering**.



Workshop Participants (Day 2), with Nadia Rehman, Member for Food Security and Climate Change, Planning Commission

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