NTEAM
NUTRITION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MECHANISM

Measuring Progress:

Summary of Progress Assessments of Eight Technical Assistance Assignments from 2017-2019 by NTEAM's TAN project
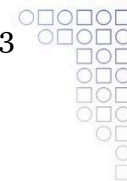
September 2020

NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL

Nourish Life

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Acknowledgments

Introduction

Nutrition International shares its expertise globally to support the scale-up of nutrition for the most vulnerable through its Nutrition Technical Assistance Mechanism (NTEAM). NTEAM's Technical Assistance for Nutrition (TAN) project, funded with UK aid from the UK government, aims to improve the coverage of multi-sectoral nutrition programmes and consequently to improve nutrition outcomes in Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) countries. This is accomplished through the provision of demand-driven technical assistance that strengthens the capacity of SUN Focal Points (SUN FP) and other stakeholders to design and deliver nutrition programmes.

From February to May 2020, TAN conducted eight progress assessments of technical assistance that had been completed at least eight to nine months prior as part of its reporting requirements. The purpose of the assessments was to evaluate the contributions made by the technical assistance products and process to eight key outcomes: **scale, coordination, quality, effectiveness, gender equality, inclusion, capacity**, and **capability of country actions and actors**. In addition, the progress assessments also sought to identify any limiting and enabling factors that affected these outcomes, derive lessons learned, and make recommendations to accelerate progress to full effective implementation of the technical assistance products.

*Figure 1: **Expected intermediate outcomes for TAN project***

✓ Improved **coordination** & multi-sectoral / multi-level engagement
✓ Increased **scale** of nutrition-related policy and programmes (e.g. more sectors, levels, groups etc)
✓ **Effective leveraging of resources** for nutrition
✓ Improved **quality** of nutrition-related programmes or policies
✓ Enhanced integration of **gender equality**
✓ Enhanced **inclusion** of less advantaged groups generally
✓ Enhanced **capability** (skills etc) for steering, managing and tracking the nutrition programming scale up
✓ Greater **capacity in country** for more delivery of improved nutrition

Of the eight assessments conducted, seven were of technical assistance provided to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) countries of Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, and Senegal, and one was of technical assistance provided to the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS). Results from the progress assessments demonstrated that each technical assistance has contributed in some way to most outcomes, having made a significant contribution to one or more outcomes in four countries and the SMS. The strongest evidence was seen for contributions to increased scale of nutrition-related policy and programs, improved coordination of multi-sectoral engagement, and improved quality of multi-sectoral nutrition actions.
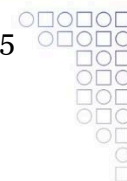
*Table 1: **Overview of technical assistance (TA) assignments assessed in the FY2019-20 progress assessment***

	Country	TA Title	TA Client & Product(s)	TA Dates
ASIA	**Bangladesh**	BGD-02 Support the Revitalization and Restructuring of the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) to Steer National Level Nutrition Actions in the Country	**TA Client**: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, BNNC **TA Products**: Strategic Framework & Operational Plan to guide revitalization of BNNC as coordinating body	Feb 2017 – Feb 2018
	Pakistan	PAK-03 Development of technical food safety & halal food standards and regulations for articles of food under Provincial Food Safety Authority Act 2014 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK)	**TA Client**: Food Safety Authority (FSA) **TA Products**: Provincial Food Safety Standards & Rules of Business	Dec 2017 – Oct 2018
	Philippines	PHL-02 Support the National Nutrition Council (NNC) in scaling up of rice fortification and distribution within the Social Safety Net Program (SSNP)	**TA Client**: SUN FP, NNC **TA Products**: Policy guidance for scale-up of iron-fortified rice through SSNP, including draft Memorandum of Agreement and information, education and communication (IEC) materials	Oct 2017 – May 2018
AFRICA	**Senegal**	SEN-02 Support development of the strategic communication plan for the nutrition multi-sectoral plan	**TA Client**: SUN FP, Cellule de Lutte contre la Malnutrition (CLM) **TA Products**: Communication Plan	Jun 2017- May 2018
	Nigeria	NGA-01 Support costing of the National Multi-sectoral Strategic Plan of Action on Nutrition (NMSPAN)	**TA Client**: SUN FP (Ministry of Health), Ministry of Budget and National Planning (MBNP) **TA Product**: Costing of NMSPAN	Jul 2017- Jun 2018
	Kenya	KEN-02 Support development and finalization of costing, financial tracking, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and enabling environment components for the 2018-2022 National Nutrition Action Plan (NAP)	**TA Client**: SUN FP **TA Products**: Costing, financial tracking, monitoring & evaluation framework, and review of legal and enabling environment	Jun 2018- Feb 2019
	Ethiopia	ETH-01 Support to the Seqota Declaration Phase 1 Evaluation, Technical Advisor (long-term TA)	**TA Client**: Ethiopian Public Health Institute **TA Products**: Seqota Declaration Phase 1 Baseline Report and Process Evaluation Report; Monitoring Framework	Jun 2017- Jul 2019
GLOBAL	**SUN Movement Secretariat**	SMS-04 Support the development of the SUN Movement Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) system	**TA Client**: SUN Movement Secretariat **TA Products**: MEAL Country Dashboards, Focus Area Briefs, etc.	Apr 2017- Mar 2018
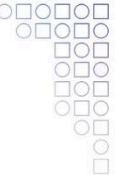
Methodology and Limitations

Methodology

To adhere to the TAN project's annual donor reporting requirements to assess intermediate outcomes of completed technical assistance, eight assignments were selected based on the criteria that the work had been completed at least eight to nine months prior to the beginning of the progress assessment in February 2020.

The progress assessment was undertaken in three phases:

1. **Desk research**
    The desk review of all technical assistance documentation helped to clarify what outcomes were expected as a result of the technical assistance and its planned follow-up, as well as key dependencies that could affect success. If not already available, a Results Pathway was developed to depict how the technical assistance process and product were expected to contribute to at least some of these intermediate outcomes.

2. **Key informant interviews and thematic analysis of responses**
    Based on the desk research, Progress Assessment Questionnaires were adapted for each key informant as a basis for semi-structured interviews. Interviews focused on stakeholders who were involved in the technical assistance process and were aware of what had happened with the products since the technical assistance was completed. Respondents included the SUN FP and government staff, as well as representatives of SUN Networks and Development Partners in some contexts.

3. **Completion and dissemination of progress assessment report**
    For each technical assistance assignment, thematic analyses of interview responses consolidated the evidence on progress toward outcomes, key challenges and mitigating actions taken to date, as well as advice on the key additional actions needed. A report describing the key findings and recommended actions was prepared for each technical assistance assignment.

Limitations

The progress assessments were carried out internally by NTEAM's TAN project, which increased the risk of assessor/interviewer bias. However, in five of the eight technical assistance assessed, the staff member conducting the progress assessment was not the person who had managed the technical assistance assignment, providing additional objectivity while still benefiting from familiarity with project processes.

It proved to be challenging to identify the right timeframe in which to assess progress in achieving outcomes, as each technical assistance product and process require different types of follow-up actions, and government action and responsiveness varies widely across countries. Additionally, where TAN has
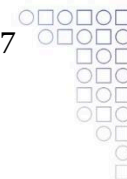
provided multiple technical assistance assignments in one country, it can be difficult to differentiate the contribution of individual technical assistance assignments to outcomes.

Finally, the achievement of TAN project outcomes depends not only on the technical assistance but also on many other independent factors, such as political priorities, resourcing, capacity and capability for effective implementation at all administrative levels of technical assistance deliverables.

Contribution to intermediate outcomes

The progress assessments have demonstrated that all eight technical assistance pieces have made a contribution to programme outcomes, having made a significant contribution to one or more outcomes in four countries. The most significant contributions made were to increased scale of nutrition-related policy and programmes, improved coordination of multi-sectoral engagement, and improved quality of multi-sectoral nutrition actions, as seen in Table 2.

*Table 2: **Overview of contribution made to intermediate outcomes based on progress assessment findings***

Outcome	BGD-02	PAK-03	PHL-02	ETH-01	KEN-02	NGA-01	SEN-02	SMS-04
Scale	Significant	Significant	Minimal	Significant	Significant	Some	Some	N/A
Coordination	Significant	Significant	Some	Some	Some	Some	Minimal	N/A
Quality	Some	Some	N/A	Significant	Some	Significant	Some	Some
Effectiveness	Some	Significant	Minimal	N/A	Minimal	N/A	N/A	Some
Gender Equality	Minimal	Some	Some	Some	Some	N/A	Some	Some
Inclusion	N/A	N/A	N/A	Some	Significant	Some	Minimal	N/A
Capacity	Some	Significant	Minimal	Some	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Capability	Some	Some	N/A	Some	Some	Minimal	Minimal	Some

Legend:
- ■ (dark purple) Outcome assessed and evidence of significant contribution made by TA
- ■ (purple) Outcome assessed and evidence of some contribution made by TA
- ■ (gray) Outcome assessed but no or minimal evidence of contribution made by TA
- ☐ (white) Outcome not assessed, not applicable for the TA

Tables 3-10 below provide specific examples of how the technical assistance assignments contributed to the outcomes.

*Table 3: **Contribution to Scale***

Scale Technical Assistance provided to six countries and to the SMS were found to have made contributions to key products and/or	In **Bangladesh**, technical assistance contributed to an increase in the number of government ministries involved in nutrition (from 17 to 22 sectors), with the BNNC supporting development of costed annual NAPs for all 22 sectors at the national level.
	In **Pakistan**, FSA activities now reach the 7 most populous districts in KPK province and are in the process of covering a further 15 districts in the second of three phases.
	In **Ethiopia**, advocacy efforts utilizing briefs developed as part of the technical assistance secured significant funding to increase the number of nutrition-related interventions to be delivered at scale.

processes that went on to be used by countries to further the **SCALE** up of nutrition.	**Kenya** and **Nigeria** now have costed multi-sectoral NAPs developed. In **Kenya**, at least 25 counties have developed costed NAPs, of which the TAN project has supported 12.
	In **Senegal**, members of the civil society platforms and donor platforms of the SUN Movement were broadly involved in the development of the communications plan.
	MEAL products were widely disseminated by the **SMS** to SUN stakeholders at the global, regional and country level through multiple communication channels.

Table 4: ***Contribution to Coordination***

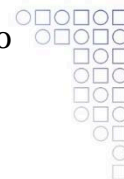| **Coordination** Evidence of improved multi-sectoral **COORDINATION** was observed in six of the seven countries.	In **Bangladesh**, strengthened coordination by the BNNC was noted by both government actors and development partners, with evidence of the BNNC taking a growing role in leading and coordinating subnational nutrition planning and implementation. Nutrition planning meetings are now being held on a regular basis in roughly three-quarters of all 64 districts, with plans underway to appoint District and Upazila Nutrition Officers.
	In **Pakistan**, multistakeholder coordination in KPK was improved by the technical assistance, which supported the outlining of the structure, roles, responsibilities and operational jurisdiction of the KPK FSA and various other stakeholders.
	In the **Philippines**, a multi-agency coordination mechanism for government stakeholders was formalized through the development of policy guidance for the scale-up of iron-fortified rice through national social protection programmes, and the drafting of a Memorandum of Agreement.
	Evidence of enhanced multi-stakeholder coordination and collaboration was observed in the development and ongoing review of **Nigeria**'s costed NMSPAN, with the Ministry of Budget and National Planning taking a lead role in coordinating a review of cost estimates in order to ensure that the requested budget is reasonable.
	Kenya's new monitoring and evaluation framework supported by the technical assistance assignment is expected to assist with coordinating nutrition actions and quarterly/annual reporting at both national and county levels, with a common set of indicators and targets outlined in the NAP.
	In March 2019 in **Ethiopia**, an inter-ministerial mission to Seqota Declaration woredas prompted national and local actors to commit to support efforts to meeting targets set using the results of the baseline survey supported by the technical assistance assignment. A monitoring framework developed by the technical assistance has helped to monitor nutrition actions at the subnational level.

*Table 5: **Contribution to Quality***

Quality	
Technical assistance contributed to improving the **QUALITY** of programmes and policies, and to better monitoring of progress for nutrition, in six countries, and at the SMS.	In **Ethiopia**, support to the baseline assessment for Seqota Declaration woredas helped identify priority interventions, targets and key performance indicators, which will improve accountability and performance management. The baseline results also highlighted gaps in people's access to health facilities in certain zones, informing a change in strategy towards working with community groups instead of health facilities to increase the reach of nutrition actions and help meet targets.
	In **Pakistan**, KPK has the highest level of harmonized food safety standards and regulations, as a result of the technical assistance assignment having integrated modern international and national standards and evidence therein.
	In **Bangladesh**, a consortium of government ministries, academia, nutrition experts and development partners, established by the technical assistance assignment, is contributing to improving the quality of planning and implementation of the National Plan of Action for Nutrition 2.
	In **Senegal**, the CLM has begun to strengthen use of digital platforms for communication to increase awareness and reach to both institutional and public audiences, building on the Strategic Communication and Advocacy Plan developed by the technical assistance.
	The costing framework developed through the technical assistance support has improved the quality of **Kenya**'s national NAP by clearly defining funding responsibilities and providing a framework for operationalization and accountability.
	In **Nigeria,** the costed NMSPAN and budget tracking mechanism developed through the technical assistance is expected to improve the quality of nutrition programming in the country, and is viewed by stakeholders as providing robust guidance for roles and responsibilities.
	At the **SMS**, MEAL data was used to inform strategic decisions. Key findings from the MEAL Baseline Report informed the priorities of the SMS and SUN Networks. This included a greater focus on countries with high humanitarian risk levels, and on women and girls.

*Table 6: **Contribution to Effectiveness***

Effectiveness	
Technical assistance contributed to improving the **EFFECTIVENESS** of two countries, and of the SMS, with regards to leveraging resources for scaling-up nutrition, and evidence suggests the potential for further	In **Pakistan**, technical assistance has contributed to the establishment of the KPK FSA as an independent revenue-generating and self-sustaining body, with financial and audit regulations providing a mechanism for managing the funds raised through enforcement of fees and fines.
	Evidence of sectoral ministries allocating specific budget for nutrition activities in line with their annual action plans was observed in **Bangladesh.**
	TAN's support for the development of a resource mobilization framework to accompany the national multi-sectoral NAP in **Kenya** is expected to contribute to increasing resources for nutrition actions by all sectors that endorse the plan. While a delay in ratifying the national plan has limited use of this framework at that level, it is being used to support county-level planning for nutrition and has resulted in commitments by at least four governors.

| results in the year ahead in at least two more countries. | The policy guidance developed for government stakeholders in the **Philippines** clearly outlines plans for scale-up of iron-fortified rice through social protection programs. |
| | TAN support to the **SMS** contributed to the use of MEAL data and products to inform advocacy efforts. MEAL products have been used as one source of data for a SUN network to help determine the type of support provided to countries and where to advise for additional funding. |

*Table 7: **Contribution to Gender Equality***

| Gender Equality

The integration of **GENDER EQUALITY** into technical assistance products was found to have been enhanced by the technical assistance to five countries as well as to the SMS. | In **Pakistan**, integration of gender considerations in the development of the FSA's rules of business and technical food standards resulted in a revision of FSA's Human Resource policies, to ensure equal opportunities for qualified males and females during the recruitment process. As a result, FSA recruited 5 female field staff in a pilot, to assess their security and the response from communities. |
	In the **Philippines, Kenya** and **Senegal**, gender equality considerations during the technical assistance process contributed to policy guidance that takes into account the specific needs of adolescent girls and women. The guidance also identifies key stakeholder groups, such as religious and community leaders, and the roles they can play in overcoming gender barriers in their context.
	In **Ethiopia**, the Seqota Declaration baseline survey report produced several gender-sensitive results and recommendations.
	As part of TAN support to the **SMS** MEAL system, the effective presentation to SUN Movement stakeholders of key findings from the baseline assessment on the performance of SUN countries on gender-specific indicators prompted the development of a MEAL brief on adolescent girls and women for high-level decision makers.

*Table 8: **Contribution to Inclusion***

| Inclusion

Technical assistance contributed to enhancing the **INCLUSION** of subnational actors, relevant sectors, and disadvantaged populations in multi-sectoral policy development and programming in three countries. | In **Ethiopia**, Community Labs supported by the technical assistance have helped to ensure the participation of different actors in prioritizing and contributing to the planning of nutrition interventions at the woreda level. |
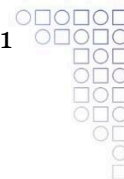| | Subnational involvement in costing workshops during the technical assistance process in **Kenya** and **Nigeria** has resulted in more inclusive action plans, as well as progress by some counties and states in developing their own costed nutrition plans. |

*Table 9: **Contribution to Capacity***

Capacity	
Technical assistance contributed to increasing the **CAPACITY** of three countries to deliver nutrition actions at both national and subnational levels.	The revitalization of **Bangladesh**'s National Nutrition Council has contributed to a noticeable increase in the level of effort aimed at enabling nutrition results among national government ministries, with the focus shifting now to also building this capacity at the subnational level.
	Important systems, resources and processes have been put in place in **Pakistan** to enhance FSA enforcement capacity in KPK province, including: hiring 105 new staff (with another 200+ recruited for phase 2), mobile laboratories, expert technical committee, enforcement and monitoring tools, and information/education materials.
	Dissemination of the Seqota Declaration baseline survey report has been completed in one of the two targeted regions in **Ethiopia**. National level stakeholders identified that as a result of participation in the survey process. Alongside the technical assistance provider, government staff had received training and developed research skills, although further training at both national and woreda level is recommended.

*Table 10: **Contribution to Capability***

Capability	
The **CAPABILITY** for steering, managing and/or tracking the scale-up of multi-sectoral nutrition programming was found to have been further developed by the technical assistance delivered in five countries and at the SMS.	Extensive staff training has been conducted by the FSA in KPK province, **Pakistan**, on both general orientation and technical/specialized topics, as outlined in the rules of business. Additional support from the technical assistance provider for training new staff and advising the FSA during its roll-out/inception phase was beneficial in setting a strong foundation for implementation and accelerating progress. The FSA is now also successfully training and orienting food processors and traders prior to certification.
	By setting up five core platforms, as recommended by the Strategic Framework, the **Bangladesh** National Nutrition Council is providing forums to discuss and disseminate up-to-date nutrition information, thus building the knowledge and skills of government staff and development partners.
	In **Ethiopia**, a process evaluation found that local stakeholders are willing to use the data generated by the baseline survey to inform programming, although there remains a need for more advocacy and training in how to use the findings to inform and strengthen sectoral planning and targeting.
	Technical assistance contributed to increased capability at State (**Nigeria**) and County (**Kenya**) levels to develop subnational costed NAPs. Ministry of Health respondents in **Kenya** reported that working with the technical assistance provider has contributed to increased staff confidence when advising other ministries on how to create costed NAPs.
	The capabilities of MEAL Advisory Group members, SUN Network Secretariats, and the **SMS** were strengthened to use data more effectively as a result of the technical assistance process. Training at the SMS for the SUN Coordinator and other staff, especially Country Liaison Team members, on MEAL indicators and country dashboards has resulted in increased use of data in discussions with country stakeholders, especially during country visits.
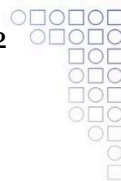
Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Timing

In many contexts, the TAN project was able to time the start of its support to capitalize on existing political commitment for nutrition. The technical assistance was then able to support key organizational and policy steps to strengthen the political economy for nutrition. However, there have been challenges in aligning technical assistance with government timelines for NAP development and dissemination. The TAN project should in future ensure adequate preparation of realistic and flexible timelines that consider counterpart processes, and schedule technical assistance inputs accordingly.

Articulation of Needs and Results Pathways

The TAN project uses a country-driven approach to provide technical assistance. Requests for support are brought forward by SUN countries, and the TAN project responds by developing terms of reference that reflect those needs with SUN FPs. The product development process, and the subsequent use of technical assistance products, have been better when clients clearly articulated their needs.

To ensure that technical assistance contributes to expected intermediate outcomes, it is recommended that for all future technical assistance engagements, results pathways are mapped prior to starting. A clear results pathway from the outset that is agreed with the client, and adjusted as needed, will help to clarify the purpose and process of the technical assistance as well as its expected contributions to intermediate outcomes.

Inception Phase Activities, Post-Technical Assistance Action Plans, and Follow-Up

To help bridge the gap between development of a policy/strategy and its implementation, it is recommended that inception phase activities also include planning for the roll-out of technical assistance deliverables.

It is also recommended that technical assistance providers work with SUN FPs to agree on a plan for disseminating the technical assistance's deliverables to all relevant stakeholders, and a follow-up action plan. This helps to ensure broad awareness amongst nutrition actors of what is expected to happen after the technical assistance is completed, including specific roles and responsibilities. Identification of budget gaps for implementation at this point will also be useful to outline next steps for resource mobilization.

To support the use of technical assistance products and identify earlier where additional support is needed, it is recommended that TAN staff plan for active follow-up with SUN FPs and technical assistance providers of all completed and ongoing technical assistance. The progress assessment interviews of SUN FPs and other key stakeholders have demonstrated the value of these follow-up conversations in identifying the progress made, and agreeing on the actions needed to enhance the use of technical assistance products and to overcome any barriers. Regular follow-up may also help to enhance fidelity of technical assistance delivery to what is outlined in the TOR.
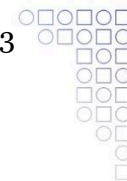
Nutrition Coordinating Bodies

The political positioning of the nutrition coordinating body, and/or the commitment of the SUN FP to advancing progress and providing strategic leadership for multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms are critical dependencies to the achievement of TAN programme outcomes.

Value of Medium- and Long-term Support

The value of providing ongoing support to medium- and long-term processes was also identified. The progress assessments identified significant delays in achieving the expected intermediate outcomes due to government bottlenecks or changes to the mandate of government agencies. Medium- and long-term support may be able to mitigate these effects by providing consistent and adaptive support to ensure that nutrition commitments are maintained. It is also recommended that the TAN project consider adopting multi-phase technical assistance arrangements for greater flexibility. For example, when supporting the costing of a national nutrition plan, it is important to recognize at the outset the difficulties that may be encountered, including different layers of costing (policy vs. intervention vs. detailed activities), the iterative processes of prioritizing actions that have costing implications, and the likelihood of needing to adjust timelines based on the multi-stakeholder process.

Participatory Approaches

The value of participatory approaches used during the technical assistance process was acknowledged throughout the progress assessment. Engagement of a broad set of multi-sectoral stakeholders in the technical assistance provision helped to increase understanding of each other's roles and increased collaboration, which resulted in more robust products and greater accountability. During the progress assessment, it has been noted that accountability issues have hampered progress toward achieving outcomes. Ensuring that the national nutrition coordinating body adequately represents the interests of the broader multi-stakeholder platform for nutrition is essential to overcoming this issue.

Technical assistance that supports subnational stakeholders has demonstrated value for coordination and implementation efforts at that level. The participation of subnational stakeholders in the development of the national action plans and development of guidelines improves implementation. To enhance technical assistance contributions to effectiveness, it is recommended that the TAN project supports work with government decision-makers at the subnational level to increase their political commitment to nutrition, that then can translate into a commitment to increase national investments in nutrition. To enhance capability outcomes, that also contribute to increased scale and improved quality of implementation, it is recommended that TAN integrate skills-building activities in the design of technical assistance that directly support subnational stakeholders in the use of data (both program and financial data) to inform annual/quarterly planning, budgeting, and reporting processes.

Gender Equality

The TAN project's gender mainstreaming success in Pakistan identified practical opportunities for integration of gender considerations within a technical assistance context where this was unlikely,
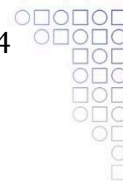
demonstrating the value of identifying key moments for gender expert involvement. However, in other contexts there has been difficulty in ensuring that TAN's commitment to gender equality resulted in practical and meaningful results. To enhance contribution of technical assistance products to gender equality, it is recommended that TAN continue its efforts at mainstreaming gender in all technical assistance, including incorporating gender expertise early-on in conceptualization.

Budgeting and Resource Mobilization

To proactively address the financial implications of nutrition policies and strategies, it is recommended that TAN support include budgeting and resource mobilization planning as part of all technical assistance products. The progress assessment results reinforce the importance of integrating financial considerations into every technical assistance process, and of ensuring that these components of the technical assistance process are completed and tested for appropriateness with future users.

Increased Cross-Country Learning

To foster increased experience sharing, it is recommended that TAN facilitate linkages between both technical assistance clients and technical assistance providers. TAN is in an ideal position to facilitate cross-country learning that can inform and strengthen current and future technical assistance processes.

Conclusion

Assessing the contribution of technical assistance to the progress made in these 7 SUN countries, and at the SMS, to achieving the TAN project's intermediate outcomes helps to inform future work by identifying enabling factors and barriers. Ongoing improvements in practices, systems and tools are helping the TAN project be more systematic, responsive and rigorous in preparing for, onboarding and monitoring technical assistance. Several of the key findings and associated recommendations have already been addressed by the TAN project in the past year. These include:

- **Results pathways:** TAN is doing more now than before to identify the desired outcomes of each technical assistance assignment as part of the design and TOR development process. There is commitment to build on these positive changes by agreeing on a results pathway for every technical assistance assignment, further clarifying the purpose and process of each.

- **Follow-up plans:** TAN currently asks all technical assistance providers to submit Knowledge Generation reports at the end of the technical assistance. It is possible to strengthen this by including the development of an exit plan by the technical assistance provider and client at the end of the technical assistance, with follow-up by TAN.

- **Mainstreaming gender equality:** TAN has increased its investment in strategic and timely expert gender support from the very early stages of technical assistance needs assessment through

design to implementation, monitoring and quality assurance. The systematic use of gender tools and steps - gender onboarding call, gender plan, first and second-line gender review - is already contributing to improvements in the quality of some deliverables, including follow-up work in Ethiopia and Bangladesh.

- **Timely and relevant quality assurance**: Increased technical capacity through dedicated TAN advisors helps to ensure that the right quality assurance is being provided at the right time. This dedicated and consistent support is helping to build productive relationships between quality assurance advisors and technical assistance providers, leading to more open and frank discussions on challenges and areas needing technical improvement.