

Terms of Reference - SISN Technical Advisory Group (TAG) in the Nigeria Micronutrient Powder (MNP)/Multiple Micronutrient Supplements (MMS) Implementation Science Study

About SISN:

The Society for Implementation Science in Nutrition (SISN) was launched in 2016 to facilitate the vital collaboration needed between all stakeholders in nutrition implementation and to pool the collective knowledge, experience, resources and commitments of scientists and practitioners to take on the challenge of scaling-up nutrition globally. In its founding it was constituted as a membership society of researchers and implementers who share common vision, values and goals to strengthen nutrition implementation and who collaborate in various ways to achieve these. It has been governed by a volunteer board of individuals from nutrition research, donor and implementing organizations.

About NAHI:

Nutrition, Agriculture and Health Initiative (NAHI) is an indigenous non-governmental organization in Nigeria. NAHI was founded in 2012 and officially registered with Corporate Affairs Commission in the year 2013 (CAC/IT/NO 59069). NAHI seeks to enhance the ability of vulnerable households to attain improved health status as well as food and nutrition security. NAHI's strategic approach is the use of the triple-A cycle: Assessment (burden of disease, delivery platform/context, coverage of interventions); Analysis (population/group most affected); and Action (nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions) in the design and scale-up of interventions. NAHI's programming focus areas include provision of micronutrient interventions (vitamin and mineral supplementation) to women of reproductive age and children under-five and providing research support to enhance understanding of nutrition programs.

Background and Purpose of the Assignment

Nigeria is a high burden country for micronutrient deficiencies. Although a range of micronutrient deficiency control (MNDC) programmes have been initiated across the country, implementation is inadequate, and coverage is low and unequal across population groups. Interventions being implemented include large-scale IFA and vitamin A supplementation (VAS) of women and young children, respectively; mandatory and voluntary food fortification programmes; biofortification of staple foods; promotion of consumption of foods rich in micronutrients; and control of helminthic infections and malaria. Intervention coverage is generally lower among the poor and in the northern zones of the country.

A national MNP programme commenced with a pilot phase in 2015 and is currently being scaled up, while a pilot phase for an MMS programme is currently being planned. The World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for both MNP and MMS explicitly call for implementation research to direct intervention rollout and scale-up. The goal of implementation research, as part of micronutrient supplements' delivery, is to determine how to ensure the acceptability of the supplement by the target beneficiaries; most appropriate distribution channels; contextually appropriate behaviour change communication strategies; cost-effectiveness; and factors necessary for intervention sustainability. The proposed implementation research responds to the call by WHO.

The overall objective of the study is to elucidate the domains of implementation of MNP and MMS interventions in Nigeria, including the overlap of delivery systems and logistics, and potential beneficiaries at household level. The overarching question driving the conduct of the research is: What factors are effective in

introducing/scaling up MNP/MMS in Nigeria and under what conditions are the factors effective? The specific objectives of the research are to assess:

1. Policies, strategies, and other normative documents guiding the implementation of MNP and MMS
2. Implementing and potential implementing stakeholder (organizations and individuals) for MNP and MMS at federal level and in two select states
3. Enabling environment for MNP and MMS at federal level and in two states
4. Characteristics of households that have an eligible beneficiary for MNP and/or MMS
5. Existing delivery mechanisms and implementation processes for MNP, and likely delivery mechanisms and implementation processes for MMS

The study is being conducted through collaboration among DSM, Sight and Life, United Nations Children's Fund, Society for Implementation Science in Nutrition (SISN), The Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health, and the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. These organizations have contributed to the overall design of the study and will provide general oversight for the study. Collaborating investigators from some or all of these organizations will play a more active role in the study by supporting the Principal Investigator (PI) to ensure that the study is conducted using the most contextually appropriate and effective tools, and according to academic and ethical best practices.

Project Components

1. Virtual stakeholder consultations: Collaborative development of research program

A central feature of utilization-driven research is that stakeholders must be engaged in appropriate ways, ever-mindful of the intense demands on their time. The national project team will achieve this purpose by engaging with a) key stakeholders at UNICEF NYHQ, Sight and Life, FMOH, UNICEF country staff and SISN TAG (subsequently referred to as the Global/National MNP/MMS Coalition), and b) key stakeholders in two project states; to discuss and refine the approach for the MNP and MMS implementation science project.

2. Desk review

The documentation to be reviewed will include:

- Key national strategies (IYCF and Micronutrient Deficiency Control)
- MNP and MMS program documentation from partners
- State MNP and MMS implementation strategies and monitoring frameworks (if any)
- MNP and MMS monitoring reports submitted to coalition partners
- Peer-reviewed journal articles and conference presentations

3. Secondary data analysis

Analysis of the most recent (2018) Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) will be conducted to identify the percent of households in Nigeria, across states and other strata, that have a potential beneficiary for MNP and/or MMS interventions.

4. Key informant interviews

Interviews will be conducted with key informants in two selected project states. The interviews will assess the perceptions of federal and state level decision makers about the enabling environment for MNP and MMS in Nigeria. Actors in the supply chain of MNP and MMS commodities will also be interviewed for this purpose.

5. Survey of beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries

Questionnaires will be developed to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of households in relation to MNP/MMS. The goal of the surveys is to understand household needs, capacities, resources, and social, cultural,

behavioral, economic, and political factors that may affect the acceptance and responsiveness to MNP/MMS interventions.

6. Assessment of frontline workers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices in relation to MNP/MMS, including implementation fidelity

Mixed methods (survey and key informant interviews) will be used to assess the knowledge, skills, and perceptions of frontline workers around MNP/MMS; changes and challenges associated with implementation protocols, and fidelity with which protocols are implemented.

7. Report writing

Reports for the project will be structured not around data collection methods, but around the specific objectives of the project. Table 1 highlights the data collection methods that will inform each specific objective.

8. Validation of project findings

Findings from the project will be validated in a physical event with a subset of project participants.

9. Final hybrid dissemination and learning workshop

The national project team will work with the Global/National MNP/MMS Coalition to organize a hybrid dissemination and learning workshop at the end of the project. This workshop will highlight the processes, achievements, and learnings from the project.

10. Journal Publications

The project team and SISN will develop at least one article in a reputable peer-reviewed journal to disseminate findings concerning the MNP and MMS domains of implementation and the implications for MNP and MMS intervention implementation, capacity building, knowledge brokering, and sustainability.

SISN's Role:

Specifically, SISN's role will be to provide technical assistance to NAHI's Principal Investigator (PI) for the duration of the initiative (see full proposal document attached). This will be achieved by convening a **Technical Advisory Group (TAG)**:

Members of the TAG will be expected to:

- Review the research protocol (and any protocol modifications) and suggest possible improvements
- Ensure that data collection and analysis methods are generally suited to research objectives
- Periodically engage with data collection and analysis team to ensure that research is progressing as planned
- Review research outputs and provide feedback
- Agree to be included in protocol that will be submitted to the National Research Ethics Committee
- Providing relevant resources e.g., highlighting key materials/research; sharing hard-to-reach documents
- Support the PI to deliver at least one article for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

The TAG will include:

- 1-2 members with experience in **MNP and/or MMS programming in low- and middle-income countries and implementation research**. For example, someone(s) who is NGO based, or maybe UNICEF Tech Advisor role for a) maternal nutrition b) child/community nutrition & has seen implementation of these or related interventions across multiple contexts – and understands what is needed to support high quality implementation.

- Knowledge research methods and tools (including the appropriateness of various tools for different stakeholders and in various contexts), as follows:
 - 1 member with **IR related quantitative research experience** who can review the protocol and advise on whether methods fit and suggest other ideas; advise on moving ahead with analysis; etc.
 - 1 member with **IR related qualitative research** experience who can review the protocol and advise on whether methods fit and suggest other ideas.

The TAG will operate for the duration of the initiative as follows:

- Will contain a minimum of four, maximum of six, members (excluding the PI) at any one time. Three of whom will be permanent members who will sit on the TAG for the duration of the project and one of which will be a SISN Board Member who will serve as Chair.
- Will engage with the NAHI project lead (and any team members she deems appropriate).
- Will be flexible, allowing for temporary, or ad-hoc, members be brought into the TAG to fulfil specific needs throughout the project on an as-needed basis, i.e., to address needs for more specialist expert technical input from a range of disciplines and contexts; to provide support on a given topic/issue that may arise.
- Will convene quarterly meetings, at a minimum. Additional ad-hoc meetings may be convened at the discretion of the members (and subject to consideration for their time/availability).
- May include a regionally distributed (predominantly LMIC), early-career, researcher/implementer, knowledge sharing sub-group around MMS/MNP research and implementation. This group would be a mechanism to support sourcing/sharing regional MMS/MNP research and experiential knowledge; providing support to the TAG on other unspecified areas; and providing professional development and networking and opportunities for the participants.

Note: NAHI project lead (or team member) will be responsible for any TAG meeting minutes/ notes and their distribution.

Project timeline and SISN TAG commitment expectations:

Over the duration of the project (June 2022 – May 2023) TAG members anticipated commitment will be approximately as follows:

NAHI Workplan and corresponding SISN Technical Advisory Group (TAG) support expectations/hrs						Estimated Time (hrs/month)			
Mnth #	Mnth	Objective	NAHI deliverables	NAHI Task	SISN TAG Role	MMS expert	MNP expert	Qualitative Research expert	Quantitative Research expert
1	M				Contract; Recruit & convene TAG				
2	J	Protocol development	Submission of study protocol to IRB	Selection of sites for study, development of data collection methods and tools	Consideration of MNP/IFA situation in different states and contribute to study sites selection process, including selection of LGAs, health facilities, and communities	5	5	4	6
					Review data collection tools and ensure adequacy vis-à-vis objectives and feasibility				
					Provide statistical support for sample size determination and sample selection for primary survey data collection				
					TAG MEETING	2	2	2	2
3	JY	1. Policy frameworks guiding implementation of MNP / MMS	1. Policy review report	Desk review	Review reports and provide feedback	2	2	4	6
4	A			Secondary data analysis; Prep for primary data collection	Provide statistical support for secondary data analysis				
5	S			Key informant interviews at federal and state level	Training for collection of qualitative data				
					TAG MEETING	2	2	2	2
6	O			Stakeholder analysis	Review stakeholder analysis and report/provide feedback	2	2	4	4
				Preparation for survey data collection	Technical assistance for setting up digitalization of data collection; Training for collection of quantitative data				
7	N		2. Stakeholder analysis report	Survey data collection	Review approach to qualitative data analysis and ensure appropriateness/adequacy	2	2	2	2
					TAG MEETING				
8	D	3. Enabling environment for MNP / MMS		Coding/ analysis of qualitative data	Training for coding and analysis of qualitative data	2	2	2	2
9	J			3. Enabling environment report	Review enabling environment report/ provide feedback				
10	F	4. Beneficiary characteristics	4. Report of beneficiaries' characteristics	Analysis of primary survey data	Technical backstopping for data analysis Review of survey report/ provide feedback	2	2	2	2
11	M	5. Delivery mechanisms	5. Implementation processes report		Review implementation processes report/provide feedback				
12	A				Review reports for all aspects of study/provide feedback	2	2	2	2
					TAG MEETING				
13	M		6. Synthesis report triangulating findings from all reviews /assessments. 7. Journal Articles	Preparation of sythesis reports and journal articles	Review journal articles and provide feedback	4	4	4	4
14	J								
Total hours						23	23	26	30

Other:

All participants will be:

- Provided with an onboarding pack with relevant details on TAG/SISN
- Invited to link to the SISN LinkedIn Page to detail their TAG role involvement
- Requested to sign a basic agreement (confidentiality, COI declaration, etc.) and SISN's Safeguarding Policy.