Establishing steering body

Why is this important for MSPs?

Setting up the structures that will manage and steer the MSP is crucial. Establishing a core steering group or committee made up of key stakeholders is recommended during the initial stages of MSP design or renovation, and if found to be useful and effective it can remain operational once the MSP is running to guide day-to-day operations.

The members of the steering group need to **represent the different stakeholder groups** (see Stakeholder mapping) who will be affected by the work of the MSP. Ensuring equity and gender balance is important on the steering group, as it is on the MSP itself (see Gender and equity). If stakeholders feel it is necessary, an **independent and neutral facilitator** might be contracted to guide the initial process and make sure that all stakeholder interests are represented in MSP design.

This steering group **works with the MSP leadership** (see Champions and high-level leadership), and some members of the steering group might be these same leaders. The steering group works in order **to establish the MSP and make or guide important decisions** about what the MSP will do, including:

1. the scope of its work (see Establish scope and mandate)
2. criteria for success (see Define success criteria and indicators)
3. necessary actions and responsibilities (see Identify actions and responsibilities)
4. monitoring mechanisms (see Review progress and use lessons)

How does this work in practice?

In **Namibia**, the Government has been working to revitalise the nutrition MSP. In order to do this, they have set up an Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) who have been tasked with finalising the National Food and Nutrition Policy, as well as reviving the National Food and Nutrition Security Council, which it is hoped will address the bureaucratic bottlenecks that the MSP was facing by being a single focus point for multisectoral nutrition in the country, leading to a revived MSP.

In **Nepal** the High Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee (HLNFSSC) is chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Committee. It includes members from all relevant nutrition sectors, including Health, Agriculture and Livestock, Education, Water Supply and Sanitation, Women Children and Senior Citizen, Federal Affairs and Local Development, Commerce and Finance. As well as providing policy guidance and undertaking specific policy decisions for nutrition programming, a major role of this committee is to provide strategic guidance to the MSP, known as the National Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat (NNFSS). The NNFSS was established in 2013 to provide operational capacity to the high-level HLNFSSC, and to ensure linkages between the institutional structures, development partners and the consultative/technical structures. It is chaired by a REACH facilitator, as an independent facilitator of the multisectoral process.