

# Identify actions and responsibilities

## Why is this important for MSPs?

For MSPs to work, it must be clear what each member or stakeholder is expected to do, and why. Once the MSP's goals have been agreed, the next step is to **identify and map the relevant stakeholders**, and how they relate to the issue that the MSP is trying to address (see Establish scope and mandate and Stakeholder mapping). Understanding what the different stakeholders are already doing for nutrition, what their specific interests and strengths are, and where there are potential duplications or synergies, will help to clarify what the different stakeholders' roles should be in the MSP. This is the start point for **matching the appropriate actions and responsibilities to the various players**.

Clarifying who is responsible for what within the MSP will help to **manage expectations** and solidify commitments, whilst helping to **avoid misunderstandings**. The process of drafting a **partnership agreement** can be a useful tool in working out agreed actions and responsibilities to be shared between equal partners. This step should be conducted in the early stages of forming an MSP. As the MSP evolves, goals may change, and the agreement would have to be revised to include new responsibilities for partners.

The agreement (whether formalised into a written agreement or just present in meeting minutes or similar) should also include **accountability arrangements** so that progress (or lack of) can be tracked. Broad roles should be clear to all stakeholders; specific actions should be communicated among all stakeholders along with clear leaders and timeframes for completion; and MSP members should discuss and agree how they

want to deal with late actions or actions that are not completed by different stakeholders. Building accountability into MSP design is one way to increase trust among stakeholders, as everyone will be clear on the process and more likely to undertake their assigned tasks (see Deepen understanding over time).

Stakeholder inclusion on an MSP should generally be broad and take in multiple ideas and interests, but note also that potential conflict of interest is an important issue to address: See SUN's conflict of interest tools and statement here:

<https://scalingupnutrition.org/share-learn/multistakeholder-engagement/preventing-and-managing-conflicts-of-interest/>

## **How does this work in practice?**

In **Uganda**, the Government's *Nutrition Action Plan 2011-2016* (UNAP) provided a multi-sectoral framework within which to tackle malnutrition. District Nutrition Coordination Committees (NCCs) were set up to coordinate efforts at the local government level. Uganda's Nutrition Secretariat (in the Office of the Prime Minister) organised orientation activities in 112 districts to inform NCC members of their mandate, as outlined in the UNAP. However, committee members were unclear as to what exactly was expected of them since the UNAP did not provide specific details of roles and responsibilities or performance benchmarks. In order to address this, stakeholders worked together through a series of consensus-building workshops to clearly define NCC membership and to clarify roles and accountabilities.

Since the composition of NCCs varied widely across local government, stakeholders decided that establishing composition criteria would ensure that the committees were truly multi-sectoral. Through identifying both NCC core membership as well as influencing actors, they created a comprehensive picture of how individual actors engage in and influence nutrition

governance actions at the local government level. NCC stakeholders then identified six areas of responsibility, including: technical guidance; coordination and partnership with nutrition stakeholders; monitoring and reporting; planning, budgeting, and resource mobilisation; advocacy; and nutrition behaviour change communication (BCC) and social mobilisation. Moreover, NCC members should receive official letters of assignment from the local government's accounting officer to formalise their commitment to these roles and responsibilities. The Nutrition Secretariat has also developed monitoring and support supervision checklists, with a section for each of the six areas, to track NCC performance and track fulfilment of roles.