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AUDA-NEPAD
AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Guidelines for the Design and Implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programmes in Africa

A Quick reference Guide for Countries in Africa wishing to establish or review to strengthen existing National HGSF programmes

WFP World Food Programme

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AUDA-NEPAD CEO Foreword

Our experience at AUDA-NEPAD shows that School Meals are a huge game changer with multiple benefits cutting across a myriad of sectors. The growing interest in Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) years after its endorsement in 2003 by the then NEPAD Secretariat under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme CAADP), clearly illustrates that moving from an idea to a project, proof of concept to a full-fledged programme takes concerted planning, resourcing and time. Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF), as one of the strategic programmes of AUDA-NEPAD, aims to link school feeding to agricultural development through the production and procurement of locally diverse foods, especially by small holder farmers. This way, HGSF fulfils multiple objectives, local agriculture, community engagement and economic development, food security, child nutrition, health and development, as well as better school attendance, retention and educability.

Moving from the 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security to the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Agriculture, African Governments agreed that HGSF is an extremely important programme which should be rolled out and scaled to all African countries by 2025. Currently more than 40 African AU Member States are implementing HGSF, albeit in different forms given the varying contexts. With the realization that School Meals serve as a very opportune entry point for social protection and related social safety net programmes, HGSF has gained a lot of traction. This outlook has recently been further buttressed by the African Common Position during the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit where a significant number of African leaders and countries signed onto the Global School Meals Coalition and many more continue to join. This move is further testament to the value and demonstrable benefits of School Meals. HGSF adds another beneficiary group – small holder farmers and small to medium food processers to create a ready market for them. HGSF will increase farmers household income and reduce food deficits, diversify their production and therefore reduce their vulnerability.

The growing interest in school feeding, and in HGSF in particular has resulted in greater numbers of school children receiving school meals. Data compiled by the African Union shows that about 65.4 million children in 51 countries now benefit from school feeding in Africa, a massive increase from 38.4 million in 2013. African leaders, through the AU meeting of the Head of States and Governments in 2016 acknowledged school feeding's contribution to human resources and capital development in Africa and adopted the Home-Grown School Feeding Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.589 (XXVI)) which established the 1st of March as the official African Day of School Feeding. In that meeting, it was recognized that school feeding has a role to play in the realization of Agenda 2063 and is one of the strategies to advance objective 2 of the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25).

The increased interest in school feeding and particularly HGSF models is also reflected in the rise in budgetary allocations by African Governments to support the scale up. Historically, school feeding programmes in the continent tended to rely on external funding, and even in-kind provision of food from donor countries. However, there has been significant progress towards self-reliance in recent years. The African Union report (2021) shows that between 2013 and 2020 domestic funding almost doubled in countries in the West Africa region (from 37% in 2013 to 76%), while the majority of school feeding budgets in countries in Southern Africa and Northern Africa are supported from domestic sources. In East Africa, although international donors continue to support school feeding to a larger extent, the share of domestic funding has more than quadrupled since 2013. This illustrates the increased commitment to school feeding by African governments

Almost, if not all countries in Africa have experience with school feeding in some form or another. However, several challenges remain in the implementation and transition to HGSF due to the lack of coordinated and systematic implementation approaches. Many African countries now seek for technical assistance in the design, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of HGSF programmes. Additionally, more and more countries are seeking to improve the quality of the meals in terms of nutrition as well increase the scale of their HGSF programmes. Therefore, this AUDA-NEPAD HGSF Guideline document is meant to fill this gap and provide general direction as well as technical guidance to African Union Member States who wish to establish or strengthen their HGSF programmes to create a truly multisectoral and win-win scenario. The Guideline is organized around the five School Feeding Quality Standards, namely i) Policy and Legal Framework, ii) Financial Capacity and Stable Funding, iii) Institutional Capacity for Implementation and Coordination, iv) Design

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and Implementation, and v) Community Participation (Bundy, et al, 2009). The Guide provides key elements (essentials) within each standard that should be considered for planning and operationalizing effective HGSF programmes. These AUDA-NEPAD HGSF Guidelines will fill the gap where technical programmatic support is lacking or limited.

While every context is different and there is not a 'one size fits all' approach to school feeding, the guide gives the basic requirements and elements that can be adapted in order to meet the standards for school feeding in line with for example the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) –School Feeding (SABER-School Feeding) by the World Bank and the World Food Programme.

Evidently, these Guidelines can only see efficient and effective application and success through strong collaboration and partnerships with key institutions continentally and globally to enhance advocacy and commitments to implement HGSF programmes. As AUDA-NEPAD, we value every stakeholder's input and support across State, Private Sector and NGOs, in the roll out of the guidelines to African Union Member States in advancing the Home-Grown School Feeding approach in Africa.

The need to prioritise and promote investments in Nutrition in Africa is a major priority. Through these HGSF Guidelines, I wish to urge the African Governments to reinforce their commitments, particularly financial, human, governance and accountability, in view of the dire impacts of COVID -19 and climate change on school feeding.

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The process of developing the guidelines culminated in the continental meeting for the validation of the guidelines held virtually in December 2021. In this regard, recognition is given for the participation and contributions of the African Union HGSF Cluster members and the countries that participated and gave invaluable inputs to the guidelines. Effort has been made to incorporate comments from the country stakeholders at every stage of writing these guidelines.

Moreover, we would also like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the Governments of Botswana - Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ghana - Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and Cote d'Ivoire-Ministry of Education, for hosting in person extensive stakeholder consultations and analytical work, along with the WFP regional and country teams for their efficient planning and coordination. In this same line, we would also like to thank the Governments of Ethiopia, Tanzania, Malawi, Nigeria and Zambia, who assessed the guidelines virtually through the survey tool.

Special thanks to Dubai Cares and WFP for funding the review and the validation process of developing the guidelines, and to the members of the African Union Homegrown School Feeding Cluster, co-led by the AU-ESTI and WFP, for hosting the continental multisectoral stakeholder workshop in December 2021, which served to ratify the final draft of the guidelines.

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Executive Summary

Health, nutrition and education during childhood and adolescence contributes to human capital and school feeding by improving health and indirectly enhances education attainment (Verguet, et al. 2020). Although school feeding is often perceived as an expensive intervention particularly in low-income countries, studies show that it can yield substantial benefits for the costs invested, at least 7 US dollars for every dollar invested in school feeding programmes (Verguet et al, 2020). The returns on education are highest, but the potential returns on health, nutrition and the local economies as well as safety net impact realised from in-kind income transfers can be substantial if there is a sustained and predictable demand on locally produced food. School feeding programmes offer multiple benefits and are therefore more cost-effective when viewed from a multisectoral lens rather than looking at only a single outcome or impact.

School nutrition programmes are an important intervention for school going children and can address many of the nutritional needs during middle childhood, and help in closing the gap between infant and young child nutrition interventions on the one hand, and the youth/adolescents and maternal nutrition.

School feeding has been recognized by African leaders for its contribution to human resources and capital development in the continent and for having an important role in inclusive development, health, rural development, gender equality and inclusive education, particularly for the poor and socially marginalised communities (African Union, 2018). Greater numbers of school children are now receiving school meals. Data compiled by the African Union shows that about 65.4 million children in 51 countries now benefit from school feeding in Africa, a massive increase from 38.4 million in 2013 (African Union, 2021). In terms of funding, the continent has witnessed a shift from a reliance on international donors to a greater share in domestic funding which illustrates the increased commitment to school feeding by African governments.

While it is notable that school feeding and HGSF in particular is widely implemented in many of the African countries, many countries still face significant difficulties in the large-scale implementation of these programmes and seek for technical assistance in the design and management of HGSF programmes. The nutrition quality of school meals is particularly weak and the element on linking school meals to local agricultural production and smallholder farmers still requires support. These HGSF guidelines are meant to provide general direction or guidance to African Union Member States who wish to establish HGSF programmes or review existing school feeding programmes with the aim to link them more directly with smallholder farmers and other role players in the school food value chain, while addressing the nutrition component more adequately.

The five school feeding quality standards form the organizational structure of these guidelines, namely, i) **policy and legal framework, ii) financial capacity and stable funding, iii) institutional capacity for implementation and coordination, iv) design and implementation, v) and community participation** (Bundy, et al, 2009). The guide features the key elements (essentials) within each standard that should be taken into consideration when planning and operationalizing HGSF programmes.

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Elements Covered Within The Five Quality Standards: Key Messages

Policy and legal frameworks

School feeding programmes should be enshrined in national policies and plans. A good and effective policy and legal environment is necessary as it facilitates the quality and sustainability of national programmes and conveys the importance that the government attaches to school feeding. The policy environment includes overarching policies at the national level, sectoral policies as well as specific policies on school feeding.

Overarching Policies and regulations in support of school feeding include National Development Plans (NDPs), Poverty Reduction Policy or Strategy documents, National Food and Nutrition Security Policies, and laws and regulations that protect school feeding and regulate certain aspects such as the proportion of food purchases that should come from smallholder farmers.

Sectoral Policies: The sectors and institutions involved in school feeding will depend on the context and governance structures but there is need to have complementary policy or regulatory documents that make it possible for each sector to make the necessary contribution for the effective implementation of school

feeding. The sectors commonly involved in school feeding include Education, Finance, Trade and industry, Agriculture (Plant and Animal Production), Fisheries/Aquaculture and Horticulture, Social Protection, Health and Nutrition/Food and Nutrition Security, Local Government, and sectors dealing with Children, Youth and Women's services. It is important to ensure alignment and harmonisation in the development of, or transformation of these sectors to make provision for supporting HGSF implementation. Elaboration of school feeding in sector policies makes it possible to pull additional resources toward school feeding activities.

School feeding Policy: It is important that there is a policy for school feeding in place in all countries that have or desire to implement school feeding. Countries need to prioritise the development of an evidence based HGSF technical policy that is multi-sectoral, with objectives across the different sectors, and that provides the rationale, scope, design and funding of the programme. For instance, the policy should establish clear linkages between the school meals programme and social protection (particularly linkages with other safety net programmes), health, nutrition, water and sanitation and agriculture. The nutrition objectives should be well articulated in the policy document and as far as possible the nutrition goals or standards to be achieved from school meals should be established and included. Similarly, such a document should show linkages between local food production (all sub-sectors of agriculture) and school feeding, especially highlighting the support needed for smallholder farmers to be able to respond to the school food demand. The policy should address the other four policy goals (financial capacity, institutional capacity and coordination, design and implementation and community participation).

Financial capacity

A national school feeding programme should ideally be funded from national core resources. This is important for sustainability and demonstrates commitment to the programme. African Governments across the continent have shown an increasing share of domestic resources toward school feeding with Eastern Africa (+24 %) and Western Africa (+39 %) showing more notable increases (African Union, 2021).

A specific budget line for school feeding: Lobby government to make provisions for adequate budgetary allocation for HGSF from the core national budget, and preferably ring-fenced as a cabinet approved budget. Additionally, the private sector should be drawn in for improvements in the value chains, processing and provide some contribution to the programmes.

Budgeting process: This should be a participatory and consultative process, often done at the national level, but engaging stakeholders from the lowest level up and using well researched data to ensure all programme costs are taken care of. Budgeting is usually done based on number of children to be catered for and involves full costing of school menu (plan for a nutritionally adequate menu), to include actual cost of food, cost of warehousing, equipment, food transportation to school and food preparation, all of which should be determined to arrive at an adequate budget.

Timely release of funds: Timely planning and budgeting at national level is required in order to make sure funds to districts or other decentralized levels are released on time. This requires improvements in coordination and communication among different sections and role players, to ensure that information desired for allocation of funds is communicated in time

Sound management and accountability of funds at all levels is important to maintain transparency and a sense of trust among the different role players including the community. It is therefore necessary to

capacitate programmes with the necessary skills to improve the financial management and sound execution of the programmes. Training and capacity building for representatives of Parent Teacher Associations and school level staff who manage the school feeding budget, as well as for the District level staff who provide oversight is an obligation.

Communication and advocacy: Create awareness among parliamentarians, high level government policy makers and officials, parents and community members, but also potential donors on the value and multiple benefits of school meals. It is important for all stakeholders and beneficiaries to understand that School Feeding programmes are a game changing investment. Country specific cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of School feeding can be conducted where resources allow, as it helps to illustrate to such audiences the benefits of SF against the costs and should form part of the awareness creation/ advocacy strategy for SF budget support.

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Institutional capacity and coordination

A school feeding or HGSF programme is better executed and more effective where there is a strong institution mandated and accountable for the implementation and monitoring of such a program. Because the programme by its nature requires the support and coordination of functions within different sectors (to include education, health, nutrition, social protection, agriculture, finance, WASH, etc.), and bringing together stakeholders with different expertise, coordination of the programme is a substantive function to be negotiated.

Institutional home and organisation: it is important to appoint a dedicated agency or secretariat with full complement of staff and that such an institution is elevated to a prominent position in government structures and possibly to a more neutral sector which can convene meetings and facilitate decision making and accountability across the sectors.

Human resource capacity: The HGSF agency should have a good number and right mix of staff, with a range of expertise/skills to reflect the diverse nature of the programme (to include the management structure and administrators, and programme managers with expertise in food and nutrition, agriculture and rural development, procurement, information communication and technology (ICT), and management information system (MIS), monitoring and evaluation, advocacy and communication.

Provide regular capacity building workshops at all levels of implementation (national, provincial, district and schools) in order to instigate the effectiveness and sustainability of the programme.

Coordination: Many programmes continually suffer from weak inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral linkages. Proper coordination across sectors ensures adequate resources are mobilised and directed to vulnerable groups such as smallholder farmers and others in the food value chain (food processors, etc) who need support.

Establish a functional multisectoral HGSF coordinating committee at national level and duplicated across the different levels of governance down to the school level, that is recognised and reporting to an agreed government structure, to facilitate coordinated planning and implementation of the HGSF programme.

Design and Implementation

The design and implementation standard provides guidance on the actual operation and day to day running of the programme. A school feeding programme is planned in response to the country-specific problems, objectives, goals, targets and expected outcomes. As such the country's context and needs should determine the programme's beneficiaries, food basket (menus), food modalities and the supply chain. In this regard, there is a need for countries and partners to work towards local procurement of food to support local economies without jeopardising the quality and stability of the food supply.

Setting objectives: It is critical that the objectives are clearly defined, but also show the benefits that HGSF will have across different sectors (education, health and nutrition, agriculture, social protection, and local economic development) for different target groups such as the children, the women, households/communities, smallholder farmers, small medium enterprise processors and traders, while managing the trade-offs. Well defined objectives help in getting cross sector support by showing the benefits that the sector will derive from the HGSF programme; justify the requests for any amendments to existing policies, strategies and programmes; they help motivate for the allocation of adequate resources to the programme; and guides the monitoring and evaluation process.

Coverage and Targeting: Universal feeding is ideal but not always possible where resources are limited. It is necessary to identify the appropriate target groups to be reached with school meals and establish both the targeting criteria and targeting methodology. Generally geographic targeting is preferred but all children within a school in identified regions and districts should be reached. However, ensure that the criteria for selection of Districts/ Regions are objective, transparent and widely shared with stakeholders.

Food basket: Should be nutritious, based on local foods, including traditional and indigenous foods as far as possible, and include a diverse number of foods/food ingredients to ensure diet quality. The nutritional standards applied to the general population should apply in school meals. In this regard, as much as practicable, the Food Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) and the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition should be important tools to consider[1]. Where possible, a country should look at specifying the nutritional

[1] *https://www.fao.org/nutrition/nutrition-education/food-dietary-guidelines/en/*

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targets for school children in order to address the nutritional needs of the school population in a given context given the complexity of multiple forms of malnutrition.

Develop a broad national school menu plan/guide which can be adapted at sub-national level to reflect regional food variations and preferences. The menu should specify the quantities of each of the foods per child and the nutrients to be achieved by the meal. Due to seasonal variations, it is important to look at other options to boost micronutrient value when the meal is not diverse or desired foods are not locally available (i.e through use of fortified blends, use of locally processed fruits and vegetables with additional micronutrient mixtures where possible, or bringing in the seasonal food item from other locations).

Food preparation and availability of fuel: Timely delivery of food requires that there is an adequate number of cooks but also adequate fuel to prepare the food. The availability of fuel is a factor influencing food or menu selection and cooking times. At the same time, the regular training of cooks and caterers is necessary to ensure that timely and efficient methods of food preparation are used, and food safety and nutritional quality of meals is maintained.

Food Safety and Quality: The safety of food supplied and consumed in schools should be given priority to minimise risks especially those posed by aflatoxin and other detrimental food contaminants which can undermine child health and cognitive development. There is a need to put systems in place to ensure that quality and food safety is maintained at all levels as food is procured and delivered to schools. In addition, it is necessary to observe and maintain food hygiene and personal hygiene standards throughout the value chain.

Linking the HGSF/SF programme to farmers. It is necessary to establish the connection between the school meals and sustainable local food production by providing adequate support and guidance to smallholder farmers and businesses. The first step in facilitating this linkage is to design a menu that is culturally appropriate, acceptable to the children and represents foods from the local environment. The procurement process is the second main way to facilitate this linkage. Its primary objective should be the timely and stable supply of quality food for school feeding, while also increasing farmers' and producers' ability to access the market.

Effort should be made to understand the food value chain/systems environment by carrying out a supply chain analysis of the key commodities in the food basket to establish production potentials of each food commodity, particularly potential to meet school food demand. Based on the food basket and the supply chain analysis, it is important to assess the options for the procurement model to be used and make a decision between opting for a fully centralised or decentralised procurement model or a combination of both procurement models depending on the logistics.

To overcome the challenges of purchasing small volumes of food from several smallholder farmers, encourage procurement of food from aggregators (could be traders) and farmer cooperatives (who themselves buy from the smallholder farmers) to ensure better quality control. In this regard, ensure that farmer cooperatives and aggregators are developed and organised in the local communities with support from agriculture or other relevant service providers. In addition, explore flexible tendering systems to accommodate smallholder farmers and ensure that they are assisted to respond to food tenders as suppliers. Capacity building initiatives on procurement should be provided at all levels where needed.

Complimentary School Health and Nutrition (SHN) Interventions: These are interventions intended to promote the school as a healthy environment and enhance the effectiveness of the school feeding programme. There is a wide range of activities covered under the umbrella of school health and nutrition interventions. The most common activities include deworming, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), nutrition education, health and hygiene education, and school gardens.

The water and sanitation component helps to prevent diseases associated with inadequate water and sanitation such as helminthic (worm) infections, allergies, and diarrhoea by providing adequate water and toilets in schools. The diseases can impair children's physical development and reduce their cognitive development, due to pain and discomfort, competition for nutrients (Vitamin A, Zinc) and Anaemia among others.

Nutrition education is important for long term behavioural change toward healthy eating habits. It should be provided in the curriculum, separately or infused in other science subjects, and also reinforced as part of

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school meals and school gardens. Attention should also be paid to food vendors that trade within or outside school premises as they form a critical part of the school food environment. Therefore nutrition messages and consumer education to both school children and parents, should be well synchronized and reinforced in the school environment to avoid conflict. Deworming is important where the prevalence of intestinal helminths is high to ensure that nutrients from school meals are adequately absorbed.

Other activities that can be considered depending on need are micronutrient supplementation, height and weight measurement to assess nutritional status, eye testing and eye glasses to address poor eyesight, dental hygiene to deal with dental cavities and menstrual hygiene to support girls during menstruation. Lack of sanitary facilities could result in menstruation leading to lost school days for girls.

Community Participation

School feeding programmes that promote strong community ownership, participation (i.e. through contributions from the local community) and accountability are stronger and more likely to successfully transition to national and local ownership.

The community should be involved in planning and decision making and therefore should be represented in school management committees. In order to standardise the participation of communities in a given country, it is important to provide guidance on the expected roles of the community in school feeding (these will differ from country to country) within the HGSF guidelines or manual.

Conduct community mobilisation, advocacy and sensitization for school communities, including the Parent Teacher Associations, and the local leadership, on importance and benefits of HGSF. Community participation also involves engaging the community in decisions on what foods to include in the food basket, the selection of cooks, sharing/providing information on the nutritional quality of the school meal, the food quantities required and what can be grown /supplied from the local area.

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Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M& E) is a critical step in the planning and implementation of programmes. For school feeding/home grown school feeding programmes, it helps to assess the benefits across the various objectives (education, child development, health, nutrition, agriculture, diversification, market access, and social protection) but also makes it possible to detect programme challenges and address them in time. However, it has been identified that there is low application of M&E for school feeding programmes in the continent. It is important to have school feeding data or indicators captured and reported at the highest level through national structures. In addition, governments are also encouraged to align with the Data Collection and Monitoring initiative of the School Meals Coalition to ensure that there is essential, up to date and reliable data, to optimise programmes, as well as monitor and track progress over time. The Africa Position presented at the United Nations Food Systems Summit further supports this stance. To ensure that regular monitoring and reporting takes place, it is important for countries to make resources available both for running the programme and for M&E. Overall, Governments are expected to strengthen M&E systems through the following;

- Encourage development of globally agreed indicators and definitions.
- Development of appropriate monitoring tools or revise existing ones (data collection, reporting tools, monitoring checklists), based on these agreed objectives and indicators.
- Include M&E staff as part of staff requirements
- Capacity building on M&E to be undertaken for national, sub-national (Provincial/District) and school staff (to include school level data capturing, reporting on food flows, financial flows, and on use of IT equipment).
- Use the information for evidence based planning and policy transformation and creating robust legal instruments for accountability.

School Feeding in the Context of Emergencies and the Covid-19 Crisis

HGSF in emergency situations presents different challenges compared to those experienced in stable conditions but also offers opportunities to develop resilience among households and communities with school going children. Emergencies may arise from political unrest, conflicts, wars, insecurity and health outbreaks, or by natural disasters such as floods, drought and famine. Emergencies result in food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition, and for school children access to education and normal school feeding may be distabilised, disorganised or even destroyed where there is protracted crisis. With COVID-19, schools were closed, and large numbers of vulnerable children were sent home, and could not access formal learning, school meals and other school health interventions for extended periods. It is estimated that 370million went without school meals at the height of the crisis in 2020.

Planning for home grown school feeding in an emergency requires the engagement and participation of different stakeholders, comprising government, non-government and international organisations including implementation partners, schools and communities. These stakeholders need to be involved in assessing the situation (overall effect of the crisis on people's lives including school children, who is affected and where), but also in determining the delivery model to be used for the school meals, and mobilising the available and additional resources required to provide the school meals in response to the emergency.

With COVID-19, the priority has been to urgently look for mechanisms to provide school meals and other health and nutrition interventions so as to build back and maintain the upward trend in access to education and school meals that had been maintained up to 2020 prior to the pandemic ((WFP, 2020).

The whole school food environment to include water and sanitation facilities, the nutrition education and nutrition services, the school meal and the modality of provision are among some of the elements to be re-examined and strengthened to ensure COVID-19 safety protocols are observed and health and nutrition is protected during schooling at this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Conclusion

The HGSF model emphasises a multisectoral approach to school feeding but also one that prioritises the purchase of foods from the local school environment as far as possible. It has been shown that the most sustainable and government-owned programs are those that are designed and implemented collaboratively by the education, health and agriculture sectors and engage several other sectors as need arises. Countries that have made a successful transition from externally supported to nationally supported programmes have explored using the HGSF model. This suggests there is an opportunity for low-income countries to kick-start their transition to nationally owned school feeding programmes, not only by establishing sustainable sources for some of their commodities, but to also contribute to local economic development through school feeding programs which depend on local procurement and community support

AUDA-NEPAD Guidelines for the Design and Implementation of Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) Programmes in Africa

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background: AUDA-NEPAD's Engagement with Home Grown School Feeding

Home Grown School Feeding is one of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), now African Union Development Agency's (AUDA) flagship programmes under the food security and nutrition programme initially under CAADP Pillar 3. The commitment was made in 2003 when the African leaders through the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) agreed that the education, health and nutrition of young children and leaders of tomorrow had to be the centrepiece for achieving the erstwhile Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other targets. The programme was thus adopted in that year as a key intervention to address hunger and malnutrition by African governments within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) agenda. Soon after, the UN Millennium Task Force on Hunger (2003) proposed that school feeding be linked to agricultural development through purchase of locally or domestically produced food. Thus NEPAD, under CAADP, teamed up with the World Food Programme (WFP) and other partners to craft the HGSF, a programme that addresses the needs and growth of the local small holder farmers, while providing nutritious meals for pupils and improving enrolment, retention in schools and educational performance. Twelve countries were identified initially for pilot programmes namely; Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia. However, implementation

was slow and not all countries went on to implement HGSF immediately. Ghana initiated its pilot HGSF programme in 2005 and the programme has been scaled up and grown to be one of the successful HGSF programmes on the continent[2].

Strategic leadership from the then NEPAD, and with support from Partners such as the Partnership for Child Development (PCD), Governments in Africa were encouraged to embrace HGSF as a key intervention within the food security pillar of the CAADP framework. In 2011, PCD, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation partnered with NEPAD to support Governments to establish and deliver sustainable, nationally owned HGSF programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. Under this partnership, some of the initial pilot countries were selected to receive direct, evidence-based, and context-specific support and expertise for the design and management of HGSF programmes and included Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, and Nigeria.

As part of developing the evidence base for HGSF, NEPAD with support from PCD carried out case studies in the Southern Africa sub-region (in Namibia, Botswana and South Africa) with a view to determine critical success factors on school feeding for lesson sharing[3].

Over the years, a growing interest in school feeding and in HGSF could be observed, with data showing that about 65.4 million children in 51 countries now benefit from school feeding in Africa, a massive increase from 38.4 million in 2013 (African Union, 2021). Furthermore, the African Union report (2021) shows that between 2013 and 2020 domestic funding almost doubled in countries in the West Africa region (from 37% in 2013 to 76% in 2020), while most school feeding budgets in countries in Southern Africa and Northern Africa are supported from domestic sources. In East Africa, although international donors continue to support school feeding to a larger extent, the share of domestic funding has more than quadrupled since 2013). This shift from external to domestic funding illustrates the increased commitment to school feeding by African governments. This also takes into consideration the Malabo Declaration regarding going to scale with HGSF.

School meals are a regional priority for the African Member States. Strategic Objective 2 of the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25) aims to "build, rehabilitate, preserve education infrastructure and develop policies that ensure a permanent, healthy and conducive learning environment in all sub-sectors and to expand access to quality education". African leaders have identified school feeding as one strategy to advance this objective, and have intensified support and recognition for school feeding programmes. In 2016, the Heads of State and Government of the AU, established the 1st of March as the official African Day of School Feeding (Decision of the Assembly/AU/Dec.589 (XXVI). In that meeting, school feeding was recognized as having an important role in inclusive development, health, rural development, gender equality and inclusive education, particularly for the poor and socially marginalised communities (African Union, 2018). In March 2021, recognizing the need to restore and scale up school meals after the Covid-19 pandemic, the African Union issued a declaration calling for the creation of a School Meals Coalition at the Food Systems Summit. The African Union and the African Union Development Agency are urging governments to sign up to the Global School Meals Coalition and show commitment to attain the set objectives, which are to, re-establish and restore effective school meal programmes to the pre-Covid-19 levels by 2030, reach the most vulnerable including those that were not being reached even prior to Covid-19 by 2030, and improve quality and efficiency of existing school meals programmes in all countries by facilitating a healthy food environment and promoting safe, nutritious and sustainably produced food, and provide balanced diets linked to local and seasonal production, where appropriate (Global School Meals Coalition, 2021). See detailed descriptions of the coalition objectives below.

One of the key objectives of the AUDA-NEPAD HGSF programme is to improve the nutritional quality of school meals by encouraging countries to develop nutrition standards for school meals and to plan nutritious meals using menu planning tools, such as the School Meal Planner (SMP) PLUS. AUDA-NEPAD piloted the tool in 2019 in three countries, Nigeria, Ghana and Botswana. The tool is available online and offered for free to governments worldwide, hosted by WFP and supported by a network of partners, including academics (PCD –

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[2] *Ghana's programme has been sustained until today and has grown in size from feeding 1,840 school children in 2005/2006 to just over 3.4million children in 2021, a coverage of 57 % of school children (GSFP communication, 2021).*

[3] *These three countries were among the few countries in Africa by 2011/2012 with fully government funded and nationally managed school feeding programmes. It is important to note that even though school feeding programmes in the three countries were not set up as HGSF models, the programmes have evolved overtime and include important components identified with HGSF such as the links to small holder farmers, and/or use of locally produced food for their school feeding programmes.*

Imperial College), regional bodies (African Union Development Agency) and private and public sector (Sodexo-Stop Hunger, NORAD).

Many countries still face significant difficulties in the large-scale implementation of HGSF programmes and seek for technical assistance in the design and management of HGSF programmes, specifically with a focus on nutrition. These HGSF guidelines are meant to provide general direction or guidance to African Union Member States who wish to establish HGSF programmes or review existing school feeding programmes with the aim to link them more directly with smallholder farmers and other role players in the school food value chain, while addressing the nutrition component more adequately. While it is recognized that every context is different and there is not a 'one size fits all' approach to school feeding, the guide gives the basic requirements and elements needed to meet the standards for school feeding in line with the Systems Approach for Better Education Results on school feeding (SABER-SF) (FAO and WFP, 2018). The document is also aligned to the policy objectives and policy levers outlined in the African Union's conceptual framework for sustainable school feeding (African Union, 2018). The Regional Economic Communities (RECS) may use these guidelines to provide the necessary support to Member States in the design and implementation of HGSF programmes. In some cases, the RECS may wish to develop their own regional specific HGSF guidelines, such as the recent regional guidelines for SADC Member States (SADC, 2021), and should therefore use this guide to inform the regional guide for better alignment. Some countries may also wish to develop their own guidelines and may adapt these continental guidelines to develop a school feeding programme guide that is responsive to the local environment.

1.2 School feeding as a model for development

The role of school feeding in enhancing education outcomes is well documented. In the African continent, a central reason for investing in school feeding has been the expected outcomes in education and learning. This is not surprising given that the continent has some of the lowest scores on education indicators globally (African Union, 2018). It is widely accepted that school feeding programmes can help get children into school and help to keep them there by enhancing enrolment and reducing absenteeism (Bundy et al, 2018). School feeding programmes also contribute to children's learning by enhancing cognitive abilities and help to avoid hunger and malnutrition. It has been shown that children with diminished cognitive abilities naturally perform less well and are more likely to repeat grades and to drop out of school. They also enroll in school at a later age, if at all, and finish fewer years of schooling (Jukes et al., 2007 as cited in Gelli, et al, 2013; Bundy et al, 2018). School feeding may also directly or indirectly reduce gender disparities as it encourages school attendance of boys and girls and guarantees access to adequate food for vulnerable children while in school. For the girls, school feeding helps to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition, and also reduces the dropout rate for girls (FAO, 2019). School feeding also improves not only farmers' access to markets but also increases economic activities of local businesses, along the school food supply chain. It is recognized as a key instrument for achieving the right to adequate food, education and health. School feeding therefore does more than provide food particularly when linked to other health, nutrition, social protection and agriculture interventions. From the perspective of the African Union report (2018) it should be conceptualised as an 'all-encompassing social protection intervention, which can achieve preventive, protective, promotive, and transformative impacts on multiple actors (African Union, 2018).

School nutrition has been relatively neglected in terms of research and interventions. Great attention has been given to the critical window of opportunity for a child's development in the first 1000 days, and subsequently led to the prominence given to nutrition interventions in this period. While the importance of this phase in the cognitive development of the child is recognised, the bigger question is what happens to the child after day 1,001 onwards. There has definitely been neglect of investments in the next 7000 days of middle childhood and adolescence and there is the need to think about nutrition interventions more broadly across the lifecycle so that there is seamless movement from one age group to the next. Poor nutrition and health among school children contributes to the inefficiency of the education system and school nutrition programmes, can address many of the needs during middle childhood and are important in closing the gap between infant and young child nutrition interventions, and the youth/adolescents and maternal nutrition. Complementary actions, for example, deworming and provision of micronutrients are also essential in contributing to the aforementioned benefits for children participating in school feeding and together form a school age package of health and nutrition interventions that further contribute to human development. Overall, 'well-designed health

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interventions in middle childhood and adolescence can leverage the already substantial investment in education, and better design of educational programmes can bring better health' (Bundy et al, 2017).

School feeding is near universal and is provided in both low-middle income countries as well as high income countries. It has been growing tremendously and went on to become the largest and most extensive social safety net in the world, reaching an estimated 388 million children daily. It is estimated that between 2013 and 2020, the number of children receiving school meals grew by 9 percent globally and 36 percent in low-income countries (WFP, 2021). In Africa, 65.4 million children were receiving school meals in 2020, a massive increase of 71% from 38.4 million in 2013 (African Union, 2021). Data shows that 33 percent of children enrolled in primary schools now receive school meals, up from 22 percent in 2013 (WFP, 2020).

The global growth in school feeding came to an end after the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic early in 2020 (WFP, 2020). The pandemic resulted in school closures globally and left 370 million children without access to the school meal they were used to. In the initial response to this situation, some countries were seeking to reach the children at home through take home rations, cash transfers and food vouchers. This illustrated yet again the social safety net function of school meals. However, to avert the serious consequences associated with school closures the need to get children back into school became a priority in the period 2020-2021, and school meals were an important strategy to do that.

An international School Meals Coalition has been established to help build back what has been lost. This coalition brings together governments, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organisations, civil society, the private sector, research and academia to drive actions that can urgently re-establish, improve and scale-up school meals programmes in countries around the world in this period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the coalition is to catalyse actions and share knowledge on school meal research, design and delivery, thereby serving as a key driver of pandemic recovery, achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the Africa Union Agenda 2063. The objectives of the coalition as presented in the School Meals Coalition concept note and summarised below are to;

i) **Restore what we had (by 2023).** This involves supporting all countries to re-establish effective school meal programmes and repair what was lost during the pandemic by;

- Ensuring that all countries, regardless of income level restore access to school meals programmes for the 370 million children who lost access during the pandemic.

ii) **Reach those we missed (by 2030):** This objective aims to

- reach the most vulnerable, in low and lower middle-income countries, that were not being reached even before the pandemic,
- Increase the efficiency of programs to enable low and lower-middle income countries to become more self-reliant. Specifically it aims to;
  - » Reach 73 million girls and boys living in extreme poverty and hunger in 60 low and lower-middle income countries.
  - » Mobilise funding to cover the cost of reaching the most vulnerable in low and lower-middle income countries with sustainable programmes.
  - » Enable low and lower middle-income countries to transition from donor-supported to nationally owned and funded school feeding programmes.

iii) **Improve our approach (by 2030).** This entails improving the quality and efficiency of existing school meals programmes in all countries by

- facilitating a healthy food environment in schools,
- promoting safe, nutritious and sustainably produced food, and

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- promoting diverse and balanced diets linked to local and seasonal production where appropriate.

As indicated earlier, it is expected that African Governments continue to sign up to the movement as a means to prioritise school feeding and the important role it plays in the development of children. Getting children into school and getting them to stay there is a social imperative.

1.3 Home Grown School Feeding Explained

School feeding programmes are generally framed as social protection or poverty reduction programmes and have been used to respond to emergency and relief situations. More recently, they are increasingly recognised as a means to support small holder farmers and overall community development (Gelli,A., Kretschmer, A., Molinas L., and de la Mothe, MR, 2013). This component of engaging farmers explains the concept, now referred to as home grown school feeding (HGSF).

HGSF programmes have received increasing attention in recent years because of the link to local agricultural development, through the purchase and use of locally and domestically produced food. The number of countries in Africa implementing this model has grown, with more than 20 countries implementing HGSF to varying degrees. The model has been widely viewed as a means to address food insecurity while promoting rural development, having the potential to contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) for food security, nutrition, education, health and agriculture (FAO, 2018). The model is designed to provide children in schools with safe, diverse and nutritious food, sourced locally from smallholder farmers (FAO and WFP, 2018). There is also increasing recognition that social protection measures are necessary to reduce or prevent hunger and poverty and to link agriculture to school feeding or other public procurement that increases benefits for smallholder farmers including sustainable capacity building.

The HGSF model can have multiple impacts and therefore requires the involvement of different sectors (health, nutrition, education, finance, agriculture, trade and markets, social protection, among others) for it to achieve these impacts. It requires a convergence and coherence in policies in agriculture, and social protection etc. The social protection objective focuses on health and nutrition of school-age children, (and their families) and is addressed through school feeding policy instruments, while the agriculture objective is primarily focused on small scale agriculture and the development of markets. The policy instruments used to support agricultural development revolve around structured demand, generated through public procurement as a means to open up markets and advance economic development for smallholder farmers (SHF) (Sumberg and Sebates-Wheeler, 2011). Case studies documented in the 'Global school feeding sourcebook (Drake et al, 2016) showed that countries are moving towards local sourcing and production of food, and away from food aid except in humanitarian crises.

Since 2008[4], the development partners involved in school feeding have shifted attention toward supporting countries in the transition and help governments develop and implement cost effective, sustainable national school feeding programmes. In some cases, the home-grown modality is supported by food assistance agencies such as WFP before Government funding becomes available. 'Home grown' is about local production or local sourcing of food but also about ownership of programmes and relevance to context. Recognition is given to the fact that each context (climate change effects, environmental degradation, planet health) is different with differing production potentials and so to support this goal, there is a need to build the agricultural production capacities in the country as a whole to ensure a sustainable supply of food to the school system.

Although the evidence of school feeding programmes' impacts on agriculture and local economic development is limited, an African Union report indicates that evaluations on HGSF programmes have shown more productive and expanded smallholder cooperative societies, as demonstrated through increased yields, and greater feelings of community empowerment (AU,2018). Many countries have recognized HGSF as a key strategy for economic growth and human development, and as school feeding programmes transition to national ownership, the expansion of the HGSF model is likely to be a key focus of policy making and advocacy in the African continent.

[4] *The period 2007/2008 is known for the global food, fuel and financial crisis which resulted in scaling up school feeding programmes as a social safety net.*

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1.4 Why do the linkages to agricultural Development make economic sense?

Almost two thirds of Africa's population is rural and thus directly dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods (OECD/FAO, 2016). The number of hungry people in the world is now over one billion, and food insecurity is increasing every day. Africa has the highest proportion (one third) of people suffering from chronic hunger. Hunger in Sub-Saharan Africa is widespread but also persistent (NEPAD, 2009). In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), for instance, smallholder farmers using centuries-old growing techniques are locked in a downward spiral of falling yields, declining productivity and spreading poverty. Even when they do adopt improved production methods, they are often unable to easily sell their produce in markets, which, for smallholders, are thin, volatile and costly. Efforts to enhance production are typically compromised by the lack of local markets for their products, and the absence of transport to reach distant markets. School feeding programs which stimulate local demand for food are an effective way of stimulating the local economy, at the same time as creating a social safety net and promoting education, health and nutrition.

As programs expand and become nationally-owned and part of the national policy framework, the size and stability of the demand will also increase. This will also provide an opportunity to put into practice contextualized productivity-enhancing innovations, technologies and practices that will support local agricultural production and smallholder farmers, especially women who comprise over 70% of smallholder farmers in SSA, and benefit the local economy. The local private sector also benefits in that jobs and profits may be created not only for farmers, but for those involved in the transportation, processing, and preparation of food along the school feeding value chain. These jobs created in rural communities will provide off-farm income generation opportunities, many of which are usually filled by women. Off-farm investment may in turn further stimulate productivity and agricultural employment, producing a "virtuous cycle" benefitting long-term food security and improving welfare in rural households. However, there is an urgent need to provide more concrete evidence around these outcomes and therefore the need to measure the returns from school feeding, particularly in the agricultural domain is important in the long-term (AU,2018). As indicated earlier, the HGSF model is likely to play a dominant role in the development of sustainable school feeding programmes in Africa.

1.5 Why HGSF Guidelines?

Many countries in Africa have had some experience with school feeding at some level, about 80% of countries according to a recent FAO study (FAO, 2018). However, several challenges are encountered in the implementation of programmes, and the transition to HGSF lacks systematic implementation.

The 2018 FAO study on the status of school food and nutrition programmes in Africa found that school meal programmes implemented by governments in 41 countries still face numerous challenges including low coverage; lack of dietary guidelines; weak policy frameworks, poor sectoral coordination and weak monitoring and evaluation. Findings also suggested that the programme objectives set are limiting and not comprehensive enough to guide implementers toward the full benefits, and particularly potential benefits of HGSF. For instance, most school feeding programmes are designed mainly to increase school attendance and retention (education objectives) by ensuring that children are not hungry, and only to a lesser extent, do they aim to improve nutrition, support local agriculture or empower communities (FAO, 2018).

Findings from the 2018 FAO report also suggest that there is strong government interest in procuring foods for school meals from local smallholder farmers but there are no pro-smallholder farmer policies, legal instruments and strategies to support this interest. Furthermore, standard public procurement rules and practises are often not favourable for purchasing from smallholder farmers and as a result, few countries have been able to source the majority of commodities from local farmers. This exclusion represents a key barrier for local smallholder producers to access these markets. These issues and challenges identified around delivery of school feeding programmes illustrate the need to provide better evidence and guidance in the design of programmes. The HGSF resource framework document (FAO and WFP, 2018) and the 'Global school feeding sourcebook' (Drake et al, 2016) provide insight on the different components necessary for evidence based HGSF programmes, and the latter additionally provides working models and good practices from the case studies which can be learnt and adapted for use in countries.

This document on the other hand is a quick reference document providing guidance for school feeding policy makers and programme officers to more easily operationalize school feeding as it responds to day to day issues that they are likely to encounter within the five broad quality standards (see section 2 below). The guide can be used as a tool to help African governments improve school feeding programmes in line with the Global School Meals Coalition objective on improving school meal programme approaches by 2030. The document may also be used as a guide when carrying out internal evaluation of country programmes.

2.0 The school feeding quality standards

There are five main standards recognized for developing quality school feeding programmes, namely Policy and Legal Framework, Financial Capacity and Stable Funding, Institutional Capacity for Implementation and Coordination, Design and Implementation, and Community Participation (Bundy, et al, 2009). These standards have gone on to be used as a basis for quickly assessing or benchmarking national school feeding systems across countries globally in what is referred to as the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) –School Feeding (SF). They provide the necessary enabling environment for implementing Home Grown School Feeding Programmes.

In Brazil, lessons from years of implementing school feeding illustrate certain key elements for success of programmes which validate the quality standards highlighted above, namely, government funding; a legal and regulatory framework; intersectorality; decentralised management; universal coverage; systematisation and continuity of supply; quality of food offered at schools, with defined nutritional recommendations; social control; purchase and aggregation of food from smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs; food and nutrition education through school gardens, and healthy and diversified menus, among others; and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems (FAO, 2018).

The Guideline is organised around the aforementioned 5 School feeding quality standards. The guide provides the key elements (essentials) within each standard that should be considered in order to plan and operationalize effective HGSF programmes. **Figure 1** below illustrates these policy goals or standards which have been used in the SABER framework to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the school feeding system in a given country. From this, countries can then go on to identify core areas in which to focus investment and develop plans of action (FAO and WFP, 2018). The diagram identifies the standard or policy goals and the main policy levers/guide for each. The

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framework has been used as a tool to help countries determine the gaps in newly established school feeding programmes.

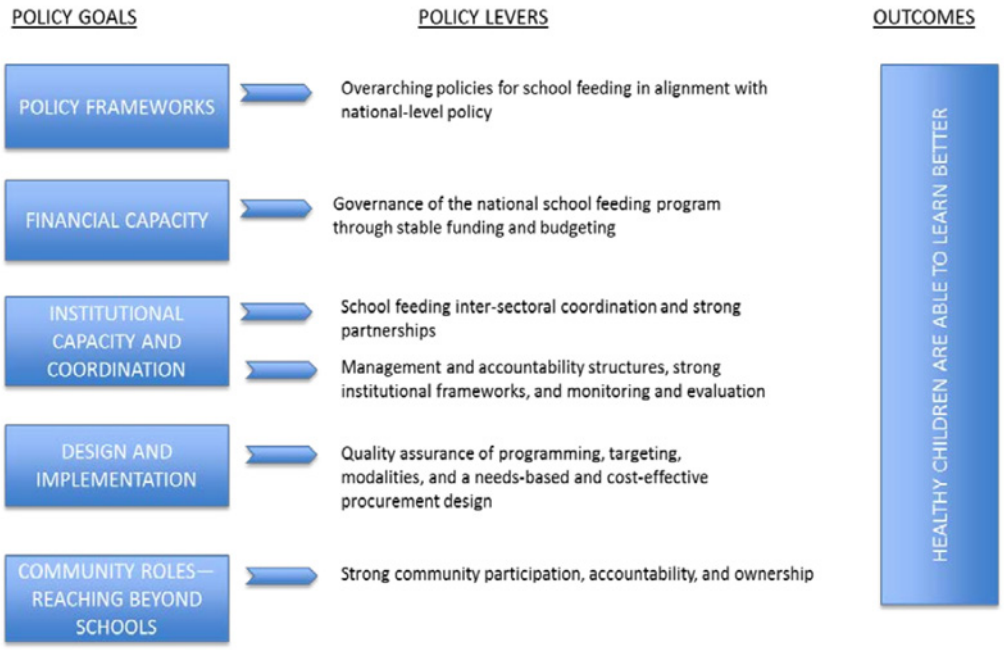

Figure 1: Policy goals and policy levers for school feeding

(From: World Bank, WFP and PCD. 2016. Manual for SABER-SF exercise). http://wbgfiles.worldbank.org/documents/hdn/ed/saber/supporting_doc/Background/SHN/SABER_SchoolFeeding_Manual.pdf)

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The outcomes of the SABER's holistic and integrated assessment of how the overall policy in a country affects young children's development are classified as either, latent, emerging, established or advanced, depending on the varying levels of policy development that exist among different dimensions of school feeding and is interpreted as follows:

1. Latent: No or very little policy development
2. Emerging: Initial/some initiatives towards policy development.
3. Established: Some policy development
4. Advanced: Development of a comprehensive policy framework

In this guide, the general description of these five school feeding standards is provided, along with key elements to be included or considered in school feeding programming[5]. A summary of critical elements to consider is given in table format for each standard.

[5] *Material taken from the Home Grown School Feeding Resource Framework Technical Document, FAO and WFP, 2018*

3.0 Key Elements to include in HGSF Programmes within Five Main Quality Standards

3.1 Policy and Legal Frameworks

A good 'policy foundation for the school feeding programme helps strengthen its potential for sustainability and accountability as well as the quality of its implementation' (SABER-School Feeding 2016).[6] Policy development should be a participatory process but also be based on the available evidence for the given context.

3.1.1 Overarching policies in support of school feeding

School feeding programmes should be enshrined in national policies and plans. An effective Policy and legal environment is necessary as it facilitates the quality and sustainability of the programme and conveys the importance that government attaches to school feeding. The importance of mainstreaming school feeding into national policies and plans, especially education sector plans, is now widely recognized as important for the transition to sustainable national programmes. This means that not only does a country need to develop a specific policy on school feeding, but higher up in the government hierarchy, there is need for overarching statements such as Acts of Parliament or constitutional pronouncements, and national development plans that speak about or are in support of school meals/school feeding. For instance, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) recommends legislating for adequate food and nutrition in schools through a school food and nutrition law (FAO, 2019). The school food and nutrition law is not a single law but encompasses a set of laws and regulations governing the different aspects of a holistic approach to school meals. Such legislation will define clear institutional responsibilities, establish participation and coordination mechanisms among the different stakeholders involved, and encourage adequate budget allocation, and a framework for monitoring and enforcement. The development of the policy should involve a wide spectrum of sectors and stakeholders and the policy document should highlight roles and responsibilities of each sector and facilitate the coordination of the programme across the identified sectors.

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3.1.2 Sector Policies

All the sectors and institutions that may be involved in School feeding need to have complementary policy or regulatory documents that make it possible for that sector to make the necessary contribution for effective implementation of school feeding. For example if there are policies and programmes to support smallholder farmers in the Ministry of Agriculture, such documents should specifically show how such programmes will be linked to the school feeding programme or how farmers will benefit from the demand created by the HGSF programme. Similarly, the Social Protection sector may wish to link the families identified for safety net programmes to the school food market. Collaboration and sharing of information across sectors is a key aspect of policy implementation.

3.1.3 Specific School Feeding Policies

A comprehensive HGSF programme requires a multisectoral policy with clear linkages to the relevant strategic sectors (education, nutrition, social protection, trade and agriculture (plant and animal production, fisheries/aquaculture, and horticulture), (where the HGSF model is preferred). Oftentimes, school feeding is conceptualised within the education sector. However, it would be difficult for the education sector to carry out all the planning and execution of school meals, together with the desired complimentary activities without the support of other sectors. For instance, the policy should establish clear linkages between the school meals programme and social protection (particularly linkages with other social services), health, nutrition, water and sanitation and other social services, including consumer education. The nutrition objectives should be well articulated in the policy document and as far as possible the nutrition goals or standards to be achieved from school meals should be established and included. Similarly, such a document should show linkages between

[6] *World Bank, World Food Programme, and Partnership for Child Development 2016. SABER-School Feeding: Manual for SABER-SF Exercise*

local food production (agriculture and livestock) and school feeding and specially highlight the support needed for smallholder farmers to be able to respond to the school food demand.

It is important that there is a policy for school feeding in place in all countries that have or desire to implement school feeding. Therefore countries that do not have one should strive to have one as a matter of urgency. In conjunction with the policy it would be preferred that a law is passed that holds the Government accountable for school meals as part of legislating for the rights of the child to adequate food and nutrition.

Table 1. Elements for Policy Frameworks

Elements to consider	Recommendations
i)National Development Plans and Legal Instruments: National level Poverty reduction strategy, National Development Plans, National Agriculture Investment Plans, National Food and Nutrition Security Plans or legal documents that endorse school feeding, and specific school feeding laws.	-The umbrella policy documents in a country such as the National Development Plans (NDPs), poverty reduction policy documents or National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, should mention school feeding. Madagascar has a National School Food and Nutrition Plan (PNANS III) which is the updated reference document for the school feeding programme for the period 2020 – 2024. -Advocate for the enactment of a regulatory government document that signifies commitment such as a law, a bill/Act of Parliament or regulation that protects school feeding and ensures it is budgeted. A school food and nutrition law is one such example (refer to the FAO, 2019 document which outlines possible provisions of such a law). -Countries may also develop regulations that ensure that a significant proportion of food purchases are made from immediate small holder farmers.
ii)Sectoral policies and strategies- such as Education sector plans/policies, social protection, agriculture and animal production sector plans/policies, and nutrition policies (e.g school Health and Nutrition, and/or nutrition and food security policy), identify school feeding as an education and social protection policy.	Such laws and regulations are binding and hold governments accountable. -Ensure alignment and harmonisation in the development of, or revision of key sector policies such as that for Education, Finance, Trade and industry, Agriculture, Animal Production and Fisheries, Social Protection, Health and Nutrition/Food and Nutrition Security, Local Government and sectors dealing with Children, Youth and Women services, so that they make provision to support HGSF implementation. For instance there is a need for a policy statement (in Education, agriculture, animal production/fisheries, and nutrition) that stipulates the purchasing of local food for school meals from smallholder/family farmers. -The Policy documents should have clearly defined objectives and spell out sectoral responsibilities.

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Elements to consider	Recommendations
iii) School feeding/HGSF policy : This is a multisectoral policy which provides strategic direction to the programme and should be aligned to national policy. The policy development process should involve (through regular consultations) all relevant stakeholders from the beginning.	-Prioritise development of an evidence based HGSF technical policy that is multi-sectoral, with objectives across the different sectors, and that provides the rationale, scope, design and funding of the programme, addresses the other four policy goals (financial capacity, institutional capacity and coordination, design and implementation and community participation) and outlines strategy for local sourcing of food, including links to local agricultural production and small holder farmers. The HGSF policy may mention the proportion of food that should come from smallholder farmers when the supply is available. -Develop specific objective on Improving the nutritional quality of school meals in HGSF policy. -Each country needs to spell out the proportion of daily nutrient requirements for the school child that should come from school meals, as well as the standards for the essential nutrients. This will inform the development of the school menu (see Design and Implementation section). -Provide guidelines on consumption or restriction of specific foods given to school children in the policy (i,e restrictions on processed foods, fatty foods, artificially sweetened foods, etc), including restrictions on sale of certain foods and beverages in schools (canteens) or immediate school environment. -In terms of community participation, the policy should outline the roles and responsibilities of the community
iv) HGSF implementation manual/ operational manual A School feeding/HGSF manual is a document which should contain information on how the programme is run. Such a document operationalizes the policy and provides guidance on day to day processes –what and how it should be done	-Develop and disseminate a comprehensive school feeding manual or user guide which covers all operational components of a programme to guide implementers at all levels. The primary focus is the elements within the design and implementation standard showing what needs to be done, by who and to what degree/ standard.

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Example of roles and responsibilities of sectors relevant to school feeding

Health and Nutrition:

i. Provide relevant data and information on the nutritional status of school going children and the food and nutrition situation of communities where school feeding is implemented.

ii. Help to define the nutritional objectives of the school feeding programme

iii. To determine and prescribe the nutrition standards to be met by school meals

iv. Advocate for and indicate the role of nutrition education and stipulate where this may be provided, i.e. during school meals, as part of school gardens, infused in different subjects within the curriculum, or offered in subjects such as food and nutrition or home economics/consumer sciences

v. Identify, prescribe and support implementation of school health activities to be provided that will complement the school feeding programme. These include deworming, nutrient supplementation, school gardens, water, sanitation and hygiene programme, eye health, dental hygiene, menstrual hygiene, etc

vi. Assist with monitoring of the food quality control by carrying out regular inspections of the fresh food supplied to schools, including meat and poultry products, if used in the school meal.

Finance and budget: Need to understand the role of school feeding and the importance of providing an adequate budget. The sector should be involved in decisions that have budget implications. Overall function is budget support.

i. Assist with the budgeting process

ii. Advocate to cabinet to ring-fence school feeding funds

iii. Play a leading role in resource mobilisation engagement with other sectors, partners and other donors

iv. Assist with monitoring financial accountability at the various levels of school feeding oversight and implementation

Agriculture:

i. Provide information or mapping on agricultural production and seasonal availability of the various agro-ecological zones in the country.

ii. Monitoring the quality of cereal and other foods supplied to schools

iii. Providing agriculture support services and skills training to farmers i.e financial resources, communication and capacity building on farming/production methods, value addition and bookkeeping, and how to respond to supplier contracts.

iv. Developing guidelines for procurement of agricultural products

Social Protection:

i. Assist with identifying vulnerable farming households and children in need.

ii. Linking households receiving cash transfers or other social service support to the HGSF demand.

Trade and Industry:

i. General marketing and development of or sourcing of markets.

ii. Usually involved in dealing with suppliers, can help with discussions on pricing, contracting arrangements, etc.

iii. Support farmers to form cooperatives in order to facilitate collection and aggregation to meet the required quantities

3.2 Financial Capacity

The Financial capacity is portrayed by stable and predictable funding to school feeding. Funding for these programmes has historically been done through a combination of sources, both non-government (i.e. WFP) and the government. When a programme becomes nationalized, the funding should primarily come from government core resources and ideally there should be a national budget line for school feeding in the long term for sustainability. Globally, many Governments have increased domestic spending on school feeding including low income countries where the share of domestic funding as a percent of overall budget on school feeding has grown from 17% in 2013 to 28% in 2020 (WFP, 2020). Establishing a specific budget line for the programme facilitates a progressive allocation of public resources for school feeding. Although it is recognized that Governments may need external financial support in the early stages of the programme, increasing the government share of resources toward school feeding ensures sustainability in the long term. It is encouraging to note that domestic funding for school feeding has shown a steady increase in all regions of the African continent, with Eastern Africa (+24 percentage points) and Western Africa (+39 percentage points) showing more notable increases (African Union, 2021).

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Table 2. Elements for Financial Capacity.

Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
i)Specific budget for school feeding School feeding should be funded by the Government and be adequately budgeted for as a line item in the Ministry of Education or other implementing sector. The capacity to fund school feeding from the national budget demonstrates commitment to the programme.	-Lobby government to make provisions for adequate budgetary allocation for HGSF from the core national budget. -A specific budget line for HGSF is necessary and should preferably be ring-fenced as a cabinet approved budget. -Make effort to increase awareness on school feeding among high level government officials and also community members, for them to understand and appreciate the importance of SF.

Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
	-Countries are encouraged to explore other innovative financing and funding possibilities, which the financing task-force can support with. The financing task-force is being established under the leadership of the Global Education Forum. It aims to improve donor coordination, the efficiency of current funding arrangements, help countries increase their fiscal capacity through innovative solutions, and marshal the resources necessary to address this global challenge. - Public Private Partnerships within a country is another option to explore for additional support for school feeding. This requires a well-planned advocacy strategy that focuses on the benefits of school feeding, including its benefits to the private sector as a corporate social responsibility. -Plan and mobilise resources to conduct a country specific cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of School feeding[7] and use the information/ data to design an effective communication strategy. This illustrates to the government and donors the benefits of SF against the costs and should form part of the awareness creation/advocacy strategy for SF budget support.
ii) Budgeting process This should be a participatory and consultative process. The budgeting process is often done at the national level but should be a comprehensive and consultative process, engaging stakeholders from the lowest level up, and using well researched data to ensure all programme costs are taken care of. Budgeting is usually done based on the estimated number of children to be catered for. Can start small and scale up with a view to universal coverage where possible. -Full costing of school menu, to include actual cost of food, cost of warehousing, and delivery costs, should be determined to arrive at an adequate budget.	-Develop a comprehensive assessment of the funding requirements on an annual basis. Historical budgets (often done to accommodate available resources) are not as reliable as they do not take into consideration changing needs of the programme, including change in the number of children requiring school meals -Determine what costs will be borne by the community and by other stakeholders, if any, (contributions in-kind or cash). - The budget process should include; a) Investment costs; such as school feeding and WASH infrastructure (refer to infrastructure under Sect 3.4). How this is worked on may differ from country to country. For some this is considered as a development budget dealt with separately under the general school development infrastructure. Infrastructure also needs maintenance and this should be budgeted for.

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[7] *A school feeding cost benefit analysis can be supported separately from other sources (usually development partners) if well advocated for and requested.*

Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
A comprehensive budget makes it possible to identify where there may be budget gaps and then develop a strategy for raising funds from other sources.	b) Running costs; • The food cost (cost per child of the meal) times number of children and number of school days based on a nutritionally adequate and costed meal plan) • Logistics, including transport, storage/ warehousing, staff, fuel, and food preparation cost, etc. • Management at all levels, including systematic monitoring and periodic evaluations • Continuous capacity strengthening structures and processes, to take care of staff turnover. NB: Cost per child is a composite of actual meal/food cost, supply chain costs and administrative costs. There is a need to balance the objective on cost efficient procurement with that on involving and benefiting smallholder farmers (prices for food from smallholder farmers may be higher). - Convene meetings with local community or smallholder farmers and other suppliers to discuss the food requirements and the food prices to be presented in the budget. Part of budget planning and budget projections should be based on discussions around the food prices in relation to market prices that will be considered for suppliers to the school feeding programme. - To meet budget gaps, it is recommended to look for innovative funding partnerships for HGSF including Public private partnerships (PPPs) and other co-financing or pre-financing arrangements to supplement the core government funds. However, it is important to review and assess the cost implications of such arrangements if any, to see if the cost outweighs the benefit.

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Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
iii) Timely Release of funds from national to Regional/Districts and to School Level through the various Government processes is necessary. HGSF Programmes often experience delayed release of funds which hampers timely and effective delivery of the programme.	Timely planning and budgeting at national level is required in order to make sure funds to districts or other identified levels are released on time. Planning should take place 4 to 6 months ahead of expected delivery time in school (previous year). -Timely planning and delivery requires improvements in coordination and communication among different sections and role players, to ensure that information desired for allocation of funds is communicated in time. i) Identify the suppliers for different foods in the menu and get quotations but also negotiate prices for the year (this may be done by District if there are variations across the country). ii) Determine the number of children to be fed in each District (This is an estimated figure based on the previous year's enrollment data). iii) Assess and communicate monitoring costs (funds and personnel) at provincial/sub-national level and District level. iv) Communicate or relay budgetary information to the Department/Section that releases funds, i.e Education, Finance, and Agriculture (for agriculture component). v) Strengthen technical capacities for the HGSF programme (see institutional capacity assessment below), i.e. monitoring -To avoid delays, where possible, it is recommended that countries seek for a pre-financing arrangement through a third party who would provide funds in the interim. This ensures that funds are released on time. The cost implications of such arrangements, if any, should be determined as indicated above.
iv)Sound Management and accountability of Funds at all levels . This is particularly important where a decision has been made to decentralise procurement down to the School Level, as often such skills are non-existent.	-Develop and provide short Refresher courses on financial management to improve capacities at school level, for representatives of Parent Teacher Associations and school level staff who manage the school feeding budget, as well as for the District/Provincial level staff who provide oversight. - Develop a financial accountability structure for school feeding funds that shows who is responsible for specific procedures and approvals at the various levels of governance to maintain an effective financial control environment. Failure to account should be a punishable offence and the consequences should be clearly outlined.

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Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
v)Communication and Advocacy This is about being strategic about advocacy and communicating benefits around school feeding to different stakeholders for better buy-in and support.	-Develop an information, education and communication strategy which outlines methods and activities to be used to reach the community with necessary information • Create awareness on school feeding and its benefits among parliamentarians as this will create a push factor when advocating for funding. • Create awareness among farmers and the community on the potential role that school feeding has in creating a demand for the farm produce. This should be followed by specific information on what to grow (based on school food basket) and the expected quantities. Community and Farmer sensitization on the school feeding market can create support for the need to fund school feeding and related activities in order to have a predictable and stable market for agricultural produce. • Information on community contributions where this is necessary

3.3 Institutional Capacity and Coordination

Effective **institutional capacity and coordination**, is about developing strong institutional frameworks, and management and accountability structures. A school feeding programme is better executed where an institution is mandated and accountable for the implementation of such a program. It requires a dedicated agency/unit or secretariat within the identified sector and with a good number and mix of staff with a range of expertise/skills to reflect the diverse nature of the programme, (to include food and nutrition, agriculture and rural development, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, advocacy and communication). However the question of where the HGSF programme should sit is not always straightforward.

The Ministry of Education is often the preferred institution for housing school feeding programmes in many countries, even though the intervention by its nature cuts across several sectors. There are exceptions and some countries have school feeding under social protection (Ghana), and Botswana's programme is housed within Local Government.

It should be recognized that HGSF is not a single sector intervention and requires the support of other sectors. It is multi-sectorial and demands a well-coordinated involvement of other sectors such as education, health, social protection, agriculture, trade and industry, finance, local government, and other school health programs.

There is general consensus from several meetings with delegates from African Countries that for purposes of coordination, the School feeding governing structure needs to sit in a more neutral sector, and where possible move it to a higher institutional structure such as one governed under the Office of President or Vice President. This not only raises the profile of school feeding but also makes it easier to coordinate support activities from other sectors. Another alternative used in Countries such as Ghana and Nigeria is to have a strong and independent school feeding unit or secretariat, within the appointed sector (e.g Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in Ghana, and in Nigeria the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme has been under the Presidency since inception until 2021[8], and under the Office of the Governor at State Level).

Each country should identify the coordination mechanism that works best. Unfortunately, a lack of coordination among HGSF stakeholders remains the biggest challenge facing African Governments in the management of school feeding programmes (African Union, 2020). HGSF programmes are multisectoral in nature and require

8 The National Home Grown School Feeding programme in Nigeria has since been moved to the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development,

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that different stakeholders, coming with different knowledge and expertise, are involved in the planning and implementation of programmes and this requires coordination as a substantive function.

Table 3: Elements for Institutional Capacity and Coordination

Elements to Consider	Recommendations
i) Institutional home of the HGSF programme nationally and at the sub-national level should be a carefully considered decision.	Raise/Elevate the HGSF governing structure to the highest level, or to a more neutral governing body in the country for better recognition. (See discussion in opening paragraph above). -Establish a dedicated and independent HGSF management agency or secretariat with access to requisite resources, and complimentary staff skills at the national level. -Where possible, HGSF management/coordination offices or positions can be established at Provincial (sub-national level) and/or District level for closer management, to include Monitoring and training at that level.
ii)Coordination This is a function that should be built into the institutional structure established. Many programmes suffer from weak inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral linkages Proper coordination across sectors ensures adequate resources are mobilised and directed to vulnerable groups such as smallholder farmers and others in the food value chain (food processors, etc) who need support in order to improve production and ability to supply to the school food market.	HGSF needs to be well coordinated with relevant sectors such as Education (where this is not in education sector), health, Nutrition, agriculture and other social assistance programmes -Establish a functional multisectoral HGSF coordinating committee that is recognized and reporting to an agreed government structure, to facilitate coordinated planning and implementation. Alternatively Countries may explore using existing multi sectoral committees and ensure that school feeding is prioritised on the agenda on a regular basis. In addition, ▪ Strengthen coordination and involvement of senior government staff ▪ Train the relevant Ministerial staff on roles and responsibilities regarding the school meals programme HGSF programme planning is a multisectoral activity and should form part of discussions at high level meetings in the different sectors but also cooperatively/collectively so that specific attention is given to beneficiaries of other social assistance programmes. In this regard; -Liase with sectors such as agriculture particularly on the agriculture assistance programmes for smallholder farmers, and social protection on the cash transfer to recipient households, so that they are linked to the HGSF demand, etc.) and especially if there is an objective on poverty alleviation.

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Elements to Consider	Recommendations
	-Similar support may be mobilised through coordination mechanisms for food processors and other role players in the food value chain. -Ensure active coordination and communication with Agriculture sector, specifically the agricultural extension service to support smallholder farmers in terms of financial resources, communication and capacity building on farming/production methods, value addition and bookkeeping, responding to supplier contracts, among other skills, if they are to adequately respond to the school food demand. This service has to be well coordinated with the HGSF programme. -Appoint representatives from the community for the school management committee, as a way to involve the community and make them an active part of the programme. This committee can furthermore support with the stock taking process at the schools, support with the design of school meals and much more
iii)Human Resource capacity An independent unit as suggested above requires the right staff complement. The number will be informed by the mix of staff skills needed. A fully functioning HGSF programme also requires skilled staff at national, provincial, District levels in core areas of the programme, to include Programme managers, nutrition, agriculture, procurement, M&E and WASH. At school level, there is a need for cooks.	-Develop a staffing structure for the HGSF secretariat or agency That includes the typical management structure (Director, and support/administrative staff, finance manager, etc) but also individuals with the requisite staff skills to run the HGSF programme efficiently. The skills include programme managers in food and nutrition, agriculture and rural development, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, Water, hygiene and sanitation, advocacy and communication, management information systems, and Information Technology. The actual numbers will depend on the size of the programme but also specific requirements for a given context and design of the programme. -Provide regular capacity building workshops at all levels of implementation (national, provincial, district and schools). This component is necessary and should be budgeted for. Training content should include: -Procurement, for procurement relevant officers, and school staff -Menu planning, rations and portion sizes, food storage, store management, food safety, nutrition education, for relevant staff at National, Provincial and District staff

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Elements to Consider	Recommendations
Capacities in the agriculture sector Capacities in the supply chain sector. The supply chains should be reliable and able to provide healthy, safe and nutritious food in an efficient way. Capacities of community members in the running of the school feeding programme.	-Food preparation and food hygiene training for cooks and caterers at school level. -Liaise with the agriculture sector to provide dedicated training and other extension services in order to improve production and processing capacities of smallholder farmers. This requires that the sector has adequate staff in terms of the extension officer to farmer ratios. The funding should be addressed as indicated under budgeting -Collaborate with other agriculture support service providers i.e. NGOS, to extend service to farmers. -Liaise with all components of the supply chain, to establish existing capacities and skills, as well as gaps in skills and resources. -Provide training and allocate funds to strengthen the sector accordingly. The school feeding model is often adapted to the capacity of supply chains available, hence the necessity for supply chain assessments as suggested under the section 3.4 on procurement (Design and Implementation). Strengthening of local supply chains is important so that they can in future support the preferred model. -Provide short exposure training sessions for Parent Teacher Association members and other community members involved in school committees on basic nutrition principles, the school menu and its selection, and the general running of the school feeding programme.

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3.4 Design and Implementation

Sound Design and Implementation. This policy goal/standard is critical as it guides the actual operation and day to day implementation of the programme. School feeding programmes in Africa are very diverse in terms of design or structure and implementation arrangements. These programmes also operate in a range of contexts and under various constraints as observed in the African Union report on sustainable school feeding across the African Union (African Union, 2018). It is therefore important for each country to find the most appropriate school feeding arrangements with the resources available and strive to incrementally reach the desired standards for an effective and efficient school meal programme.

A school feeding programme is planned in response to the country-specific problems, objectives, and expected outcomes and impact. As such the country's context and needs should determine the programme's beneficiaries, food basket (menus), food modalities and supply chain. In this regard there is a need for countries and partners to work towards creating a delicate balance among international, national, and local procurement of foods to support local economies without jeopardising the quality and stability of the food supply.

Main elements to be included and clarified are; the objectives that programme seeks to address, the targeted population for school meals, the food basket or menu and the extent to which local foods are included, the food procurement model to be used (including whether to centralise or decentralised procurement), the extent to which procurement will be addressing smallholder farmers and how. The entire design and implementation

process should be participatory, engaging various sectors and stakeholders in government, development partners, civil society and private sector groups, as well as the school children and communities that the programme seeks to benefit.

3.4.1 Setting Objectives

The objectives of an HGSF programme depend on the needs of the population in the country and are set with the aim to satisfy the identified needs of different population groups. HGSF programmes combine programmatic activities around the actual feeding with potential education, health and nutrition, agriculture, social protection, and local economic development objectives and therefore the process inherently requires involvement of different stakeholders. It is critical that the objectives are clearly defined, but also show the benefits that HGSF will have across these sectors for different target groups such as the children, the women, households/communities, small holder farmers, and traders, while managing the trade-offs.

There is not a one-size fits all programme approach or model to school feeding as each context is different. It is therefore important for each country to develop primary and secondary objectives, clearly articulate its own programme theory behind linking the different target groups, and identify the programme activities and impact pathways, including process maps as a first step. This will be based on what is likely to work best for them. Having clearly defined objectives has the following advantages as outlined in the Home Grown School Feeding Resource Framework (FAO and WFP, 2018);

i) They help in getting cross sector support by showing the benefits that the sector will derive from the HGSF programme;

ii) Objectives justify the requests for any amendments to existing policies, strategies and programmes

iii) They justify the allocation of adequate resources to the programme

iv) Identifying objectives guides the monitoring and evaluation process which requires that indicators are developed to match the objectives. These indicators for monitoring ensure that credible information is collected and documented to illustrate the extent to which benefits are achieved.

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3.4.2 The Target population

Universal feeding is ideal but due to limited resources this is not possible in many countries. In most African countries, school meals are primarily targeted to children in public primary schools in areas with high prevalence of poverty and food insecurity and to other vulnerable populations such as children with disabilities, and orphans (African Union, 2018).

Where targeting is necessary, a clear database with good targeting criteria should be put in place. It is necessary to identify the appropriate target groups to be reached with school meals and this can only be achieved after a situation analysis is done which assesses school feeding needs and establishes both the targeting criteria and targeting methodology. The targeting criteria should be communicated to and agreed upon by school feeding stakeholders to avoid conflict and tension particularly in areas where school children receiving meals and those that are not receiving meals reside in the same administrative location.

3.4.3 Food Basket

It is important that countries run school meals programmes that have defined context-specific national school meals quality and nutritional standards and policies for their programmes (WFP, 2021). This means that the menu should be designed in a way that it meets the nutritional goals while also utilising the local foods as much as possible. Meal planning is an important step in developing a food basket and the food basket informs the rest of the implementation, particularly with regard to food procurement.

This should not be a haphazard decision and requires meal planning considerations such as the nutritional targets to be reached for the school children, the availability of foods selected, and alternative foods across the country, feasibility of delivery, storage and ease of preparation (See diagram in Annex 1). On the whole, meal planning should be a consultative process led by the HGSF office but involving different stakeholders, i.e. education, health, where feasible, agriculture, and district or school level committees. It is important that countries utilize available meal planning tools such as the SMP PLUS software which can be used to support governments with the creation of nutritious, affordable school meals. SMP Plus is simple to use and provide specific food quantity calculations for the desired nutrient values and where data is available can provide costed meal plans.

The composition of the food basket determines to what extent the school feeding programme addresses nutrition while maintaining direct links with local agricultural production. It is indeed possible for school meals to drive a more diversified agricultural production.

3.4.4 Linking the HGSF programme to farmers and food procurement

Countries in Africa should strive to ensure that school feeding programmes are promoting the connection to sustainable local production of food, respecting national and subnational contexts and providing adequate support to small farmers and businesses, where appropriate (School Meals Coalition, 2021). The first step in developing the link to local farmers is to design a menu that is culturally appropriate, acceptable to the children and represents foods from the local environment. Promoting consumption of local foods is necessary and should be advocated for in various community structures, including farmer training sessions and in school level meetings with parents and community opinion leaders, as well as at relevant high level meetings at the national and sub-national levels. Having local foods in the school food basket, creates the necessary demand to spur production by local smallholder farmers, thus addressing food insecurity while promoting rural socio-economic development.

Procurement is the next important step through which farmers are linked to the HGSF programme. Whichever food procurement approach is chosen, its primary objective must be the timely and stable supply of quality food for school feeding. At the same time, the procurement approach should be designed such that it increases farmers and producers' ability to access the market. Support to smallholder farmers to respond to the demand from the school feeding market should be framed under the objective of safe and stable supply. Research is needed to explore the trade-offs of different pro-smallholder procurement models, analysing the data on the costs and impacts, including issues around market integration, scale, timeliness, prices, food types (including perishables), and seasonality.

HGSF procurement is often subject to the same regulations as other public procurement processes governed by policies, laws and detailed rules

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that aim to ensure efficient use of resources but also transparency in procurement decisions. The Issue of decentralisation highlights the inherent conflicting interests between procurement processes' prioritisation of transparency, accountability and value for money, with the HGSF objective to prioritise procurement from smallholder farmers. These competing interests, though not completely incompatible priorities, must be balanced in order to generate stakeholder buy-in and the intended financial and social return

Because public procurement procedures are complex, they create a barrier for smallholder farmers' ability to access the market for school feeding programmes. It is therefore necessary for countries to explore more flexible procurement procedures.

The pricing of food commodities is also sensitive and requires careful thought since it may result in smallholder farmers not being able to supply food to schools if the price given is too low. Pricing is tied to contracting and competitive tendering procedures and regulations that bind procurement decisions to accept the lowest price. This works for large producers and suppliers who can benefit from economies of scale and offer lower prices, but not so for small scale farmers and traders. There is a need to look at alternative criteria for awarding tenders, but also looking at other interventions such as adopting reservation, or preferential strategies that ensure that a percentage of the food contracts go to smallholder farmers at a fair price. Countries such as Botswana have suggested having bargaining councils for producers who would look at market prices but also ensure that the prices arrived at are fair for producers and that the Government gets value for money. Countries are advised to make reference to Module 3 of the HGSF Resource framework (FAO and WFP, 2018) which provides details on procurement procedures and alternative contractual arrangements that may be considered in support of smallholder farmers. Table 4 provides the basic elements and recommendations for the key components of the Design and Implementation standard.

Table 4 A: Elements on Design and Implementation

Elements for Consideration	**Recommendations**
HGSF Programme objectives Programme objectives should be clear or specific enough to guide implementation. It is generally expected that school feeding expresses objectives with outcomes and impacts across education and learning, health and nutrition, safety net, and agriculture and local economic development.	Design and implement school feeding programmes to achieve cross-sectoral policy objectives: The HGSF Strategic plan and guidelines should clearly state objectives on education, health and nutrition, and agriculture, and local economic development, clearly stating the goal to advance local agricultural productivity and overall social and economic development through local purchase of foods to the extent possible. The intended beneficiaries should be outlined and include school children and farmers, with special focus on female farmers, and other secondary beneficiaries along the supply chain.
Coverage and targeting: - The ideal is to have universal feeding but given limited resources, expansion should be gradual to make sure effective technical guidance and support is provided. Targeting is therefore essential and is a means to reach families and communities lacking resources to provide for their school age children and/or to encourage them to take children to school. It is a critical element of any effort to improve the impact of a school-feeding programme on education.	Generally geographic targeting is preferred. The aim is to target all children in school, particularly in Government registered public primary schools, including Early Childhood Education programmes, in the Regions and Districts selected. -Ensure that criteria for selection of Districts/Regions are objective, transparent and widely communicated. -The selection or targeting criteria should be shared with stakeholders.

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Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
There should be shared understanding and agreement among a multi-sectoral group of stakeholders on the criteria/indicators used and the methodology for targeting.	Some targeting criteria and indicators to consider; i) Geographic targeting- to districts/areas most affected by food insecurity, and high poverty rates (some countries work with poverty or socio-economic ratings or profiles agreed upon at national level). ii) Areas with high levels of malnutrition iii) Disaster affected areas iv) Areas with poor access to social services v) Household targeting- to food deficit households, female headed or child headed households, low income, etc. It is possible to rely on a community's subjective assessment of needy households which may take several of these factors into account. vi) The above targeting criteria should also look at educational indicators such as enrolment rate, drop-out rate, and attendance to help in the selection of Districts or regions to be supported with school meals. -carry out regular monitoring and surveys to assess extent and reasons for not reaching targeted groups/schools, and propose remedial action. Often the most vulnerable are missed by school feeding programmes.
Nutrition, Food Supplies and Procurement i)Determining the food basket: This discussion on the food basket is part of the menu planning process. The food basket should be nutritious, based on local foods as far as possible, and include a diverse number of foods/food ingredients to ensure diet quality. The nutritional standards applied to the general population should apply in school meals.	Diversification of food basket and inclusion of local foods is necessary to reflect regional and seasonal variations and also aim to improve nutritional content. Strategies include; a) Promote consumption of local foods in local community forums (this can be done through agriculture extension and nutrition education services). NB: Activity a) may happen before or alongside the menu planning process below. b) Develop school meals nutrition standards/nutrient targets specific for school children[9]. This is a prerequisite for menu planning. Even where this is not possible the country is still expected to spell out the general proportion of nutrients that should be supplied by the school meal ration. Refer to the FRESH document adapted by UNESCO which explains how to determine optimal rations for school meals[10]. Generally 30% of the daily

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[9] *Nigeria is one country that has devised its own nutrient targets for the National Home grown school Feeding Programme and can share experiences and lessons.*

[10] *UNESCO, 2004. Guidelines to develop and implement school feeding programmes that improve education. FRESH Tools for Effective School Health. http:www.unesco.org/education/fresh.*

Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
Where possible, a country should look at specifying the nutritional targets for school children in order to address the nutritional needs of the school population in a given context. Due to seasonal variations, it may be necessary to consider other options that will help to improve or maintain the nutrient value of the meal.	recommended nutrient intake is used as a guide, assuming that the child receives the full complement of nutrients from the other two meals at home. However each context demands careful examination of its nutritional needs and experiences and then responds accordingly. c) Develop a broad national school menu plan/guide which can be adapted at sub-national level to reflect regional food variations. The menu should specify the quantities of each of the foods per child and the nutrients to be achieved by the meal[11]. d) Consider other options to include or boost micronutrient value when the meal is not diverse enough due to seasonal fluctuations (i.e fortified blends or fortified food products such as maize meal), or food supplements (iron, zinc) for vulnerable groups. Value addition and related appropriate technologies of local produce should be incorporated in strategies to increase income. e) School menus should be openly displayed in the kitchen or other appropriate area designated by the school feeding management to ensure reinforcement. f) Develop Handy Measures to be used by the caterers and cooks to translate the recommended quantities on the menu into quantities for cooking and serving. This ensures that desired nutrients are achieved for the school child. g) Capacity building on menu planning should be carried out at all levels. h) Menu planning should be a consultative process engaging various stakeholders.
ii)Establishing farmer linkages and source of food. a) Linking farmers to HGSF markets	-The HGSF programme, particularly at sub-national level and/or Districts, should communicate its food requirements (specific food and quantities) to the Ministry of Agriculture and to farmers. -Regular communication and meetings should be maintained between the HGSF implementing sector, Ministry of Agriculture and private sector to ensure that MOA and other agriculture service providers engage farmers and prepare them to supply food to the HGSF market.

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[11] *Meal planning tools such as the SMP PLUS software can be used to support governments with the creation of nutritious, affordable school meals. SMP PLUS is the first digital school menu creation platform and is particularly useful for HGSF programmes: It allows meal optimization through Innovation Accelerator (IA), creating more affordable, nutritious, local and culturally acceptable meals; as well as menu management and sharing, and integration of communities into the meal creation process. The tool is available online and can be used by governments worldwide. Fifteen countries are at different stages of adoption and 19 more on the pipeline.*

Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
	-Develop a database of farmers or farmer organisations that are eligible to supply food to schools so that the schools know where to go for specific products. Schools or purchasing entities may be able to create contracts with the farmers -Secure the services of NGOS/private sector engaged in agriculture extension where possible, who then work collaboratively with Ministries of Agriculture to support farmers with the sole purpose of meeting the HGSF demand for food. -Include programmes on value addition/food processing and related capacity building programmes to ensure that those smallholder farmers and other members of the community benefit in different ways from the school food market.
b) Source of Food and production potential. Food should be procured as locally as possible before sourcing from other regions or externally (from outside the country)	Prioritise the purchasing of locally grown food for school meals before reverting to other options. -Consider including fresh food such as fruits and vegetables in the menu. These are also easier to provide from the local environment. -However to cover for lean periods when food is unavailable due to seasonal variations, countries need to explore other value addition opportunities that ensure all year supply such as food processing (drying or bottling food), or using cold rooms for storage where feasible. -Assess production potential of each District selected for school feeding (see points raised under procurement and logistics). Food insecure Districts would require a different approach/model for sourcing food (see points
iii)Food Procurement capacity: Generally in most countries, procurement is left to the government procurement entities, some of whom have not had to deal with food procurement and therefore capacity building is necessary. The standard procurement procedures are often rigid and not as compatible with the characteristics and capabilities of smallholder farmers or small scale suppliers.	Where possible make provision for dedicated staff for procuring food for schools whether at national, district or school level. -Capacity building on procurement should be provided at all levels. -Explore flexible tendering systems to accommodate smallholder farmers. e.g. it is possible to have an open tender system but request for a mandate contract which ensures that purchasing a certain proportion of food from SHFs is mandatory. -Ensure smallholder farmers are organised and assisted to respond to food tenders as suppliers.

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Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
iv)Food Procurement and Logistics <u>Supply chain analysis</u> There is a need to have efficient supply chain management. Understanding the food value chain/ systems environment is key to avoid pipeline breaks <u>Food Storage</u>	-Coordinate and carry out a supply chain analysis of key commodities in the food basket, and establish the seasonal availability of supplies and availability by agro ecological zones. This will establish production potentials of each food commodity, particularly potential to meet school food demand, but also availability of supplies across the year. -Assess food storage requirements, as well as take stock of existing facilities and their distribution. This is important to determine if there are facilities to hold stock of food commodities such as cereals after harvest and throughout the lean months, pending distribution to schools. -Government should assess the options and make a choice between opting for a fully decentralised procurement model or a combination of centralised and decentralised procurement based on the supply chain assessment of different food commodities in the food basket. Decentralisation allows for closer linkages with smallholder farmers. See Annex 2 for further discussion and illustration of the different models. - where possible, procure food from aggregators (could be traders) and cooperatives to ensure quality control. Aggregating food helps meet the school food demand that individual smallholder farmers would be unable to do.
v) Procurement model This is either a centralised, decentralised or a combination of both models with different variations of each, depending on context. (i,e insourced or outsourced)	The decision on the model to adopt should be carefully thought out, looking at the trade-offs in each case while at the same time looking at ways to benefit smallholder farmer suppliers (In this case, there is need for mechanisms to track the source of food to ensure that smallholder farmers are benefiting). It is possible to use different models for different food commodities as a means to balance issues of transparency, accountability and smallholder farmer interests. -A suggestion has been made that countries explore the possibility of developing centralised points in convenient locations across the country where food is procured from local farmers, is checked for quality, cleaned, processed, prepared and distributed to schools. This model overcomes the challenge of intense infrastructure requirements as discussed below, but also saves on the demand for fuel. The centres may also carry out all other processes except the food preparation as the distribution of raw food is still cheaper and safer than cooked food. In either case, the demand on transportation and related costs for food distribution is greater and the tradeoffs should be assessed against the benefits.

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Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
vi)Food Safety and Quality The importance of food safety and delivering wholesome food should be emphasised.	There is a need to determine what systems will be put in place to ensure that quality and food safety is maintained at all levels as food is procured and delivered to schools. Handling and Safety of food supplied and consumed in schools should be given priority to minimise risks especially those posed by e.g. aflatoxin contamination which can undermine child health and cognitive development. -Ensure that agriculture establishes a system to check cereal products for aflatoxins and other contaminants. Similarly the fresh foods to include meat, poultry and fish products should be inspected by the relevant authority in the Health sector before or at the point of delivery to the schools. -Develop guidelines on food safety standards and handling of food along the supply chain. The guidelines will also help with monitoring food supplies
vii)Procurement Guidelines-	-Develop simple food procurement guidelines. The guide on procurement should indicate what commodities are centralised, and at what level (national, Provincial, district), and which ones can be decentralised to schools. This decision would then be followed by the respective guidance on allocation of funds. -Where linkage to smallholder farmers is an objective, the guide should indicate that purchases from smallholder farmers are prioritised for certain food commodities. -Add guiding principles on value addition across the entire supply chain so that suppliers get better value for their products.
Food preparation i)Timely delivery of food requires that there is an adequate number of cooks but also fuel efficient stoves.	-For on-site feeding, it is necessary to establish guidelines on the number of cooks required for a given number of learners. The number of cooks depends on enrollment. It is important to establish/determine (through consultative processes and benchmarking) the preferred ratio of cooks to learners and include in the implementation manual. For example, Botswana school feeding programme gives a guidance of one cook per 125 learners, while the National School Nutrition Programme in South Africa gives a broad guide of one cook per 200 learners but based on this guide, individual Provinces use a sliding scale to accommodate small and big schools. In countries where food preparation is done by caterers operating from home, it is important to establish a guide for the basic equipment to be used for cooking and transporting food to schools while observing all food hygiene and food safety protocols.

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Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
The availability of fuel is a factor influencing food or menu selection and cooking times. In many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, firewood is the main fuel used for cooking school meals. This has been raised as an issue of concern given the impact of wood fuel on deforestation and climate change due to gas emissions. Fuel conservation and use of alternative fuels should be a priority. ii)Food and Personal Hygiene in food preparation iii)Training of cooks -Training of cooks is important for better efficiencies, food safety and conservation of nutrients.	- encourage/promote use of fuel efficient stoves and other fuel like gas to protect forests. - Promote forest farms at schools (reforestation) as a mitigation measure. Observe and maintain food and personal hygiene standards throughout the value chain. -Develop a food and personal hygiene guide which should be mounted in kitchens for reinforcement (should form part of a monitoring checklist). -Cooks should do regular medical checks, at least twice a year. Personal hygiene should include ensuring that cooks have clean uniforms during food preparation and serving of meals. -Capacity building for cooks and caterers is necessary to ensure that timely and efficient methods of food preparation are used, and food safety and nutritional quality of meals is maintained. -Ensure all cooks are trained including those used on a rotational basis. - The cooks should be trained on the importance of preparing and serving food on time.
iv)Feeding time The guidance on preferred feeding time to achieve desired result is context based. Timely serving of meals is important if the food is going to serve the purpose of ensuring attention in class and enhancing learning. This will also depend on whether the Government programme offers one or two meals per day (NB: Most Governments are currently only able to afford one meal per school day), and whether the school day is half-day or full day. Feeding time should be planned such that it does not interfere with teaching and learning time.	-Where one meal is provided within a half day school structure, it is recommended that it be served early in the morning or mid-morning. No meal should be served when the children are ready to go home as it defeats the purpose of enhancing attention and promoting learning. -Explore more efficient means of food preparation and food processing of agricultural produce to come up with easily prepared meal options. This requires engagement of the private sector and the community. - Make provision for some easily prepared nutritious foods on the menu. For example the Botswana menu has a day when local bread (which can use fortified flour) is offered with peanut butter, jam and milk) This helps when there are challenges with normal food preparation resources (fuel and staff shortages, etc) and reduces the risk of delays which result in feeding time interfering with teaching/learning time.

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Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
v)Infrastructure for school feeding at school level This includes kitchens or cooking shelters, food storage and water and sanitation facilities. The level or quality of facilities do determine to a large extent the foods and food preparation methods selected for school meals particularly for in-sourced models of delivery. However, for countries that use the out-sourced models of delivery, the school infrastructure requirements are less, but with a higher burden on individual caterers who should have the required catering equipment. At the same time, such models present challenges with monitoring of food safety and food preparation conditions of individual caterers.	There should be a minimum standard in terms of basic minimum infrastructure that schools should have for HGSF programmes to function. A system for ensuring compliance before a school can be certified to start school feeding can be instituted. Facilities required are kitchens or covered cooking shelter, food storage facility, feeding shelter or classroom alternative in the short term, potable water and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities. -In addition, It is preferred that serving utensils are provided by the school as far as possible as it is easier to observe and maintain a standard measure during serving, and secondly it ensures cleanliness is maintained. -For outsourced models, schools are required to provide dining facilities. -It may be necessary to lobby for Government and private sector support for a once off HGSF infrastructure budget separate from the regular school feeding budget. -The development of food storage facilities is especially critical to reduce transaction and transportation costs. -Use a Public Private Partnerships approach to support infrastructure development.

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3.4.5 Complimentary School Health and Nutrition Interventions

This refers to the integrated package of school based health and nutrition interventions and school feeding is a significant component of that package, usually consuming the largest share of the school health and nutrition budget. There is a wide range of activities covered under the umbrella of school health and nutrition interventions and include, water, sanitation and hygiene, deworming, nutrition education, micronutrient supplementation, school gardens, height and weight measurements, eye testing and eye glasses, dental hygiene and menstrual hygiene. All these activities are easily delivered through schools to improve education and health outcomes by enhancing nutrition, alleviating hunger, and preventing disease and countries identify their own package based on need and available resources. A 2020 African union report showed that 64 percent of governments combine school feeding with a package of more than four additional health and nutrition interventions (African Union, 2021).

Healthy children in healthy environments learn more effectively and the complementary school health and nutrition (SHN) interventions are intended to promote the school as a healthy environment and enhance the effectiveness of the school feeding programme. In Reimagining School Feeding, Bundy et al (2018) acknowledges that the school is a convenient platform to offer services to school age children. It takes advantage of existing infrastructure in schools (i.e. teachers and proxy health workers) to offer services that would otherwise be directed at the health system.

The water and sanitation component is a key requirement in school health and has received great attention in the past. Diseases related to inadequate water (quantity and quality), sanitation and hygiene lead to huge burden of disease, as much as 88% of diarrheal disease according to WHO (2004), and this contributes to school absenteeism. Helminthic infections also affect hundreds of millions of school-age children, and can impair children's physical development and reduce their cognitive development, due to pain and discomfort, competition for nutrients (such as Vitamin A,and Zinc), anaemia, and damage to tissues and organs (WHO,

2009). Inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene conditions affect boys and girls differently and may contribute to unequal learning opportunities. For girls and female teachers, lack of sanitary facilities could mean that they cannot attend school during menstruation.

The interventions in response to poor water and sanitation, and the burden of helminths are to provide adequate water and hygiene facilities in schools, including adequate toilets (covered under WASH programmes), hygiene education and deworming. Other interventions which should be considered for inclusion are nutrition education, nutrient supplementation where necessary, and school gardens.

The important role of nutrition education should not be overlooked either, given the growing burden of non-communicable diseases in low, middle and high income countries. Introducing healthy eating early in a child's life inculcates positive behaviour which lasts into adulthood. Nutrition education should be provided in the curriculum but also reinforced as part of the school meals and school gardens.

Nutrition messages and consumer education to both school children and parents, should be well synchronized and reinforced in the school environment to avoid conflict. For instance, food vendors that trade within or immediately outside the school form a critical part of the school food environment. Ensure that such vendors are regulated and provide food or snacks in line with the agreed nutrition guidelines and nutrition messages given in and outside the curriculum.

Table 4B: Elements on Complimentary interventions

Complimentary school health activities The more common activities include deworming, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), nutrition education, health and hygiene education, and school gardens, and should be delivered in conjunction and collaboratively alongside school feeding. They are all simple and cost effective interventions which help to improve nutrition and health outcomes.	It is important to strengthen internal programme coordination to reflect coordinated planning and implementation of school health activities. For instance, ▪ Provide nutrition education as part of the school feeding programme, ▪ Provide nutrition education as part of the curriculum. This should be mandated at the highest level to ensure that it is implemented. It may be infused in other science subjects or offered separately. Nutrition education is important for long term sustainability of behavioural change toward healthy eating habits ▪ School gardens: These should be used in conjunction with school meals for delivering practical nutrition education messages. They also encourage interest in agriculture. The food from school gardens may be used to complement the fresh food requirements of the school feeding programme. ▪ Deworming – This is important where the prevalence of intestinal helminths exceeds 50%[12] to ensure that nutrients from school meals are absorbed

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12 *World Health Organization. 2011. Helminth control in school-age children: A guide for managers of control programmes (2nd edition). Available at:* http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/44671/1/9789241548267_eng.pdf

The following interventions are equally useful. They address frequently observed health problems or deficiencies in school children that result in excluding children from learning or limiting access to education. They include; -Eye testing and eye glasses to deal with poor eye sight -Dental hygiene to address dental cavities -Anthropometric assessments, such as height and weight measurements, to assess nutritional status -Menstrual Hygiene to support girls who lack sanitary facilities during menstruation. Lack of sanitary facilities means that menstruation leads to lost school days for girls.	▪ Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Schools should provide adequate access to clean water for drinking and washing hands and adequate sanitation through the following; -provide adequate hand washing points for the number of children -Ensure clean water for drinking -Provide adequate number of toilets/Ventilated Improved latrines for the size (number of children) of school, with separate toilets for boys and girls. (Refer to the WHO guide for acceptable ratios). In addition to gender, there is a need to consider the age of children as younger children may need to have age appropriate toilet facilities. -Basic hygiene guidelines should be followed with regard to washing hands. ▪ Develop and coordinate services on eye tests and eye glasses, and dental hygiene, to support children who would otherwise not access these services. These services are usually difficult and expensive for individual families in under-resourced settings but become affordable and accessible when provided through the school. ▪ Menstrual hygiene is often offered as part of the WASH programme but it is important to highlight it for recognition and action. The lack of menstrual facilities such as sanitary pads and clean toilets results in girls staying home during menstruation and losing valuable school days, which could result in poor performance and appropriate toilet facilities. -Basic hygiene guidelines should be followed with regard to washing hands. ▪ Develop and coordinate services on eye tests and eye glasses, and dental hygiene, to support children who would otherwise not access these services. These services are usually difficult and expensive for individual families in under-resourced settings but become affordable and accessible when provided through the school.

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	▪ Menstrual hygiene is often offered as part of the WASH programme but it is important to highlight it for recognition and action. The lack of menstrual facilities such as sanitary pads and clean toilets results in girls staying home during menstruation and losing valuable school days, which could result in poor performance and drop out. ▪ Advocacy and resource mobilisation through the private sector is one way to meet the additional finances required to run this programme.

3.5 Community Participation

Community participation in school meal programmes is the fifth goal and is premised on the idea that school feeding programmes that promote strong community ownership, participation (i.e. through contributions from the local community) and accountability are stronger and more likely to successfully transition to national ownership. The communities are expected to make various contributions to the programme either in cash or in kind, but also to participate in decision making during the design and implementation processes of the programme.

Findings from the AU report (2018) showed that communities are involved in the implementation for nearly all school feeding programmes in the continent, primarily in meal preparation and serving, giving in-kind or monetary contributions and procurement. In many countries the community provides the cooks to prepare the food, and this may be a paid or voluntary position depending on availability of resources. The community may also provide other inputs such as infrastructure or small/low cost food items such as condiments, through the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAS). They may also produce and supply the vegetables.

In terms of decision making, the parents or community may get involved by appointing representatives in the school management committee. In general, where the communities are fully engaged in the school feeding process, they have the potential to hold the head teachers and teachers responsible for school meals accountable for quality of food, accountable for school feeding funds, and for the transparency in procurement processes. It also stimulates greater understanding and ownership by the community. For example, at local/school level, the community can ensure that they witness and counter sign on food items received and utilised. Similarly, they can monitor the serving of food to learners. Sharing and discussing Information on the foods included in the food basket and what can be grown in the local area can increase the probability of the local farmers being able to provide food and sell to the programme.

In order to standardise the participation of communities in a given country, the government should define the expected roles of the community in school feeding (these will differ from country to country), and provide guidelines on participation within the HGSF guidelines. The guide should specify the nature of support required from the communities or community representatives, with minimum standards to be met in order for them to function more efficiently.

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Table5: Elements on Community Participation

Elements for Consideration	Recommendations
Strong community participation and a sense of ownership in the HGSF programme among community members Strengthen relationships between the school and the community. This requires good leadership at the school and also at the community.	Conduct community mobilisation, advocacy and sensitization in all school communities on importance and benefits of HGSF ▪ Engage local leadership such as chiefs and area members of parliament in sensitization meetings. ▪ Appoint representatives in school management committee ▪ Capacity development around School leadership and community relations for PTA members. ▪ Re orientate the PTA members on roles and expectations of the HGSF programme management ▪ Sensitization of Community/parents on quality and quantity of food expected
Sharing of information on HGSF issues with community members such as the selection of cooks, the numbers required and whether remunerated or voluntary. Sharing/providing nutrition information on the foods included in the food basket, the menu selection and quality control, and food production requirements of the programme (covered under Design and Implementation above). This develops a sense of ownership among the community members and increases the probability of local farmers to supply food to the programme.	-Involve community in selection of cooks and ensure adequate representation of all segments of community in school catchment area. -Standardise the number of cooks per school and (guidelines to be provided in the HGSF implementation manual), and inform community - Ensure there is understanding among parents and community members on the menu and its acceptability within the cultural context. -Provide information on the nutritional quality of school meals -Engage community in decisions on the food basket such as the selection of menu items and making choices from several alternatives considering nutritional quality, acceptance, but also quantities required and what can be grown /supplied from the local area. -Communities/parents to be involved in monitoring of the school feeding programme, such as • random checks of food prepared for children for quantity and quality control

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3.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

3.6.1 The Importance of Monitoring and evaluation

The need to monitor and evaluate programmes is not unique to school feeding programmes, and is a critical step in planning and implementation of programmes. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in SF/HGSF programmes helps to assess the benefits across the various objectives (education, health, nutrition, agriculture and social protection) and is critical to increasing their impact. Monitoring makes it possible to detect programme challenges and address them in time. However, M&E of school feeding is often weak in many countries. The African Union report (2018) identified that there is low application of M&E for school feeding programmes in the continent, with limited usage of automated feedback systems to contribute to policy making. Governments should therefore align with the Data and Monitoring initiative of the School Meals Coalition[13] to ensure that there is essential, up to date and reliable data, to understand and optimise programmes and particularly to monitor and track progress over time. It is important to have school feeding data or indicators captured and reported at the highest level through national structures such as the EMIS system in the education sector. To ensure that regular and timely monitoring and reporting takes place, as well as periodic evaluations, it is important to ensure that HGSF programmes not only secure adequate resources to run the programme, but that they make funds available specifically for M&E.

Table 6: Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting of School Feeding Programmes

Elements to consider	Recommendations
Monitoring and Evaluation Monitoring and evaluation should form a major step or component of the design of SF/HGSF programmes. <u>M&E Gaps</u> Several gaps have been observed in school feeding implementation and are aligned with the gaps identified by the Data and Monitoring Initiative of the School Meals Coalition:	-Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework which covers all the components of the quality standards for school feeding outlined above. The indicators should be identified early on and tracked throughout programme implementation. The indicators should be aligned to the programme objectives. In many situations, it is becoming necessary to revisit the programme objectives, particularly as countries move toward home grown school feeding models, and subsequently develop expected programme outcomes, indicators and outputs. - In identifying indicators, ensure that some of these form part of the core set of indicators (to include nutrition for school-age children) that will be collected by governments for comparability of data. Indicators should have clear methodologies for calculation and reporting. -Establish an agreed set of reporting processes that will be used by the government to capture and report high quality data. -Collect baseline data at the inception of programmes to provide the basis for measuring progress on the various indicators across sectoral objectives (Education, health, nutrition, and agriculture, animal production and fisheries). -Develop monitoring systems that focus on programme processes, (as part of the M&E framework) i.e how well a programme is functioning.

[13] *The Data and Monitoring Initiative aims to establish a single trusted and official UN database on school meals that systematically collects, stores, curates and makes accessible, timely national data on school meals, and school health and nutrition programmes. The Initiative will be composed of members from AU, AUDA-NEPAD, and UN agencies in consultation with Member States at the AU and School Meals Coalition level.*

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Elements to consider	Recommendations
M&E gaps include ● Lack of globally agreed indicators & definitions ● Lack of systematic data collection methods (i.e. poor data capturing, delays in submission of data to relevant reporting lines) ● Lack of single, official trusted global database ● Lack of resources (monitoring finances, staff, equipment, and transport) to facilitate M&E processes across the various levels from school to national level. Analysis and reporting of data or information collected is as important as the data capturing process because it informs policy direction.	-Strengthen M&E systems through the following; ▪ Encourage development of globally agreed indicators and definitions. ▪ Develop appropriate monitoring tools or revise existing ones (data collection, reporting tools, monitoring checklists), based on these agreed objectives and indicators. ▪ Develop electronic tools for ease and timely transmission of data. ▪ Include M&E staff as part of staff requirements ▪ Capacity building on M&E to be undertaken for National, sub-national (Provincial/District) and school staff (to include school level data capturing, reporting on food flows, financial flows, and on use of IT equipment). ▪ Use technology, including mobile technology, to improve M&E. -Establish a robust dissemination and communication strategy to allow practitioners to fully utilise/apply the information. Information that flows from schools to the Districts or Subnational levels to National level should flow back after analysis. Each section of the chain (e.g from District administration to the school), should be able to provide feedback that informs policy and future improvements or changes to the programme. -Monitoring data should be derived from other key sectors linked to HGSF implementation i.e. Agriculture, Health, Nutrition and Social Protection particularly on outcomes and impacts of the programme. The evidence is important to support advocacy and resource mobilisation.

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3.6.2 Main Aspects to Consider in Developing a Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation System

The following questions and processes outlined in the Home Grown School feeding Resource Frame work (FAO and WFP, 2018), need to be decided for individual programmes as they identify what indicators to use (Questions such as, What information is needed and why?, Are we looking for the right things?, What purpose will it serve, Will the chosen indicators demonstrate achievement of intended results?, are necessary in developing indicators. These questions are best guided by the objectives of the programme. Decide which information is necessary to capture. Each objective may have one or more outcomes and outcomes will have corresponding indicators and outputs.

i) ***What will be the source of information desired and with what tools will it be collected.*** This is talking about the data collection tools and methods for getting information. It is important to think about the flow of information from the starting point to the points of quality checks, aggregation,

analysis, storage, and reporting. Data collection may be manual and paper based but countries need to move toward electronic and online systems to minimise errors but also for timeliness and ease of reporting.

i) ***What capacities are there to implement monitoring and reporting systems?.*** Is there infrastructure, skills and competencies to ensure that the M&E design is implemented? If capacities are not adequate, then there is a need to strengthen them.

i) ***Which information will be desired for programme management and by whom.*** Identify the demand for different pieces of information and by who? Which information will be shared and with whom? This entails knowing the audience, the presenters and options for presentation formats and use of information.

3.6.3 HGSF Specific Indicators and Outcomes

Table 9 only outlines examples of HGSF specific outcomes and indicators. Those related to education (such as enrolment, attendance, promotion, dropout and completion rates); nutrition and health (dietary diversity score of school meals, anthropometric measurements (i.e height, weight, body mass index), experience with hunger, incidences of illness or other medical evaluations, WASH related indicators; and other programme components are necessary and should form part of the overall monitoring and evaluation of HGSF programmes.

Table 7: Examples of HGSF Monitoring Indicators

<table>
<tr><th>Outcomes</th><th>Outcome Indicators</th><th>Outputs</th><th>Output Indicators</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Degree to which small holder farmers participate in HGSF programme</td><td>Volume and value of food purchased from Smallholders (SHFs) for the HGSF programme by commodity.</td><td rowspan="3">Schools include food from smallholder farmers in their menus</td><td rowspan="5">No. of schools that include food from smallholder farmers in their menu

Quantity and share of food from small holder farmers provided through school meals

No. of boys and girls that consumer food from small holder farmers

No of school, and No. of boys and girls covered by the HGSF programme

Quantity of food provided through school meals</td></tr>
<tr><td>No. of smallholder farmers (by gender) who sold food to the HGSF programme</td></tr>
<tr><td>Volumes and value of sales from smallholder farmers to targeted aggregators</td></tr>
<tr><td>No. of Smallholder farmers that have increased agricultural outputs, by commodity</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Effects of participation in HGSF on smallholder farmers' production and productivity</td><td>No. of farmers who diversified their agricultural production</td><td>Schools include food from smallholder farmers in their menus</td></tr>
</table>

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Outcomes	Outcome Indicators	Outputs	Output Indicators
	No. of farmers who have increased their production (yield/HA) by commodity		
	No. of farmers who obtained access to credit to improve production and productivity		
Effects of HGSF participation on Smalholder farmers' vulnerability	Diversity of crops and animal products produced	Smallholder farmers, including women, and other role players in the food value chain are supported in producing quality food in surplus so as to supply to school feeding programmes	No. of smallholder farmers who have received support in increasing and diversifying production
	Dietary diversity score for farmers and households		Income received as a result of participation in supplying food to schools
	Coping strategy index for smallholder farmers		Number of value addition activities started by women and other community members in response to the school food demand.
	Share of expenditure on food by smallholder farmer households		Number and value of inputs provided to small holder farmers by type.
Effects of higher acceptance of HGSF	Absenteeism of boys and girls after introduction of HGSF	School-aged children receive school meals	No. of girls and boys in different age-groups who received school meals Amounts of food provided by food group
	Dietary diversity score of children receiving school meals		
	Absenteeism of boys and girls because of sickness	Investments are made to avoid sources of disease and infection	Facilities built or improved No. of schools and children with access to improved drinking water source
Effects of greater dietary diversity and quality of school meals		Schools with HGSF provide adequate diverse and fresh foods	Number and Percent of schools covered by HGSF programme that provide meals that meet nutrition criteria

Source: FAO and WFP, 2018. Home Grown School Feeding Resource framework. Technical Document. Rome

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4.0 School Meals in the context of Emergencies and the COVID-19 Crisis

4.1 Context

The implementation of school feeding in stable settings is more established and much easier to deliver a meal for children more consistently. It is however much more challenging for governments to initiate school feeding in emergency contexts. Emergencies may be orchestrated by political unrest, conflicts, wars, disease outbreaks and insecurity, or by natural disasters such as floods, drought and famine. In addition there have also been silent emergencies such as those brought about by diseases such as HIV/AIDS which has affected vulnerable households over time and resulted in many orphaned children following death of one or both parents.

The recent crisis brought about by the onset of covid-19 in early 2020 is an emergency situation that has renewed the realisation of the need to plan for school feeding in both stable and emergency situations. Emergencies result in food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition. Access to education and normal school feeding may be destabilised, disorganised or even destroyed where there are situations of insecurity, violence, recurrent or protracted crisis and poverty.

In an emergency event, it is important to assess the extent of destruction and impacts on the population and livelihoods due to the emergency context paying attention to political and social dynamics that could affect the initiation of school feeding. Assess the current condition of the education system, the enrolment, and gender or ethnic disparities, and the level of hunger or malnutrition among school children. It is important to note the damage to existing school facilities (learning facilities, food preparation facilities, hand washing facilities, potable water, etc) and determine what is necessary for initiating school meals. It is also necessary to determine the feeding modality as well as delivery model to be used. The choice of modality should broadly be based on the target population to be reached, the specific emergency context and its impacts, the available infrastructure, and the ease of preparing food. It may be necessary to have a combination of both on-site feeding and take home rations for the more vulnerable children, as well as snacks or easily prepared foods where facilities are limited. Other approaches, such as cash transfers, where it has not been used prior to emergency, can be used

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to facilitate purchase of food from the local markets. Fortified foods (to address nutrient gaps) may also be used where fresh foods are not feasible.

The HGSF model can be used in emergency contexts, particularly in climate related disasters and chronic food insecurity to build resilience among vulnerable households and communities affected. An integrated resilience approach, such as WFP's Sahel resilience scale up strategy[14] that is implemented in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger and Mauritania combines school feeding and nutrition interventions, with development of productive assets and capacity strengthening activities for livelihood support, and in some cases (i.e Mali) fosters market linkages by sourcing food from local retailers and producers/smallholder farmers in order to improve their livelihoods.

There is need for resource mobilization that ensures a fund is created to cover for school meals during emergencies. This may be configured within the school feeding management unit budgets or be part of the national disaster and emergency response units.

4.2 The Covid-19 crisis and impacts

Globally it has been estimated that 370million children went without school meals as a result of school closures (in 199 countries) at the height of the COVID-19 crisis (WFP, 2020). In Sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 50 million children in 42 countries were sent home and went without access to education, school meals and other school based health interventions for extended periods (African Union, 2021). The disease has therefore had negative impacts not only on education, but also the health and nutrition of school children. For many vulnerable children in the continent, the school meal is the only decent meal they have in the day. The COVID pandemic has resulted in household loss of income compromising the availability of food but also quality of diets.

The negative effects of school closures on education can be lifelong particularly in low resource settings where homeschooling is not an option. Some girls may not be able to re- enter school where practices such as early marriages prevail. They are also at risk of early pregnancies and gender based violence. At the same time, diets at the household level have been compromised due to loss of income, lack of some foods and changing dietary practices due to lock-downs and other containment measures (UNICEF and WFP, 2020). Programmes such as deworming, oral health and nutrition checks provided through the school platform were also affected by the covid-19 pandemic. While immediate solutions to learning, such as online learning was a possible option for some children, implementing school feeding during the pandemic has been a challenge particularly in Africa where most of the school feeding programmes primarily serve in-school meals (African Union, 2018). This highlighted the importance of the need to design school-based programmes that can better protect the health and nutrition of children and also are adaptable to changing situations.

With schools opening during the pandemic, the priority is to provide a safe school environment and ensure the numbers of children returning to school reach pre-COVID-19 levels. School meals are an essential part of getting children into school and keeping them there. The whole school food environment to include water and sanitation facilities, the nutrition education and nutrition services, the school meal and the modality of provision are among some of the elements to be re-examined and strengthened to ensure COVID-19 safety protocols are observed and health and nutrition is protected during schooling at this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, similar to other emergencies, it will be necessary to carry out a situation analysis to determine the extent of damage brought on by the emergency, the extent to which school attendance has been affected and the impact on school feeding delivery, and ensure that meals are targeted to the most vulnerable, by creating a database of vulnerable households with school children who can benefit, particularly from take home rations. The assessment will also be able to inform what other feeding modalities are possible for the different settings. Some examples are on-site prepared meals (very common with existing programmes), pre-prepared or off-site prepared meals, take-home rations (to cater for children at home), snacks, and food coupons.

Countries are advised to refer to the recent UNICEF and WFP document on school re-opening and school based nutrition in the context of COVID-19 for further information and guidance. It is also recommended that countries develop their own school feeding COVID-19 protocols covering the different levels of school feeding programme implementation and the Ghana School Feeding Programme COVID-19 protocol is one such example of a context specific guide.

[14] *WFP 2019. Intergrated Resilience in the Sahel. WFP, RBD.*

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5.0 Scaling up Home Grown School Feeding: Key Take Aways

1. Governments have made effort to scale-up school feeding programmes, but there are disparities in coverage between regions and income groups. The HGSF model is likely to play a dominant role in the development of sustainable school feeding programmes in Africa. These continental HGSF guidelines provide a set of rubrics to work with and are paving the way for countries to scale up HGSF.

2. School feeding programs which stimulate local demand for food are an effective way of stimulating the local economy, at the same time as creating a social safety net and promoting education, health and nutrition. As programs expand and become nationally-owned and part of the national policy framework, the size and stability of the food demand will also increase.

3. In order to plan for evidence based programmes, the assessment of the needs/opportunities for the HGSF programme is essentially the very first step ('first' quality standard), especially where the programme is not yet in place. It is also an important step in the formulation of evidence-based policy and legal frameworks as well as in the design of the programme (refer to Annex 2).

4. School feeding/HGSF programmes are anchored on five policy goals or standards which have been covered in this guide;

Policy goal 1: Policy frameworks - A good policy environment provides the enabling environment for HGSF to function, enables efficient implementation and leads to quality national school feeding programmes. The existence of a policy or strategy is crucial for ensuring budgetary commitments. The AUDA-NEPAD together with the African Union and development partners are committed to work with countries in Africa to help them develop a policy framework to encourage investments in school feeding.

Policy goal 2: Financial capacity: Stable funding is necessary for long term sustainability of HGSF/SF programmes. Currently programmes focus on delivering food, albeit limited in nutrient quality and diversity and according to the WFP (2020) global report, there is little or no funding for capacity strengthening. Public, private

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and government partnerships are crucial to help fund and scale up HGSF programming. Resources are needed now more than ever before to build back the school feeding coverage levels experienced before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Policy goal 3: Institutional capacity: HGSF programmes require the involvement of different actors from different sectors to bring their knowledge and expertise in the planning and implementation of the programme. However for this to work, it requires an effective national coordination mechanism, usually a coordinating committee that is specifically set up and mandated to provide oversight for the school feeding programme. The HGSF/SF programme management should be positioned within a highly placed institutional governance structure to demand respect and recognition. This ensures the support needed for coordination and budgetary allocations.

Policy goal 4: Design and Implementation: A sound design and implementation arrangement is critical for the success of the school feeding programme and provides the operational guidance. It requires that all the different components are well thought out and brought together to form one cohesive programme, to avoid haphazard implementation. The key elements have been outlined in the guide. Ensure that objectives are clearly defined as a critical first step, and show the benefits that HGSF will have across different sectors for different target groups (school children, the women, smallholder farmers, traders, etc). Clear objectives will also guide the monitoring and evaluation process. Countries are advised to consult widely in this process and engage the required expertise where needed.

Policy goal 5: Community Participation: school feeding programmes that promote strong community ownership, participation (i.e. through contributions from the local community) and accountability are stronger and more likely to successfully transition to national ownership. It is important to set up formal mechanisms for ensuring that communities participate in school feeding (including the roles and responsibilities).

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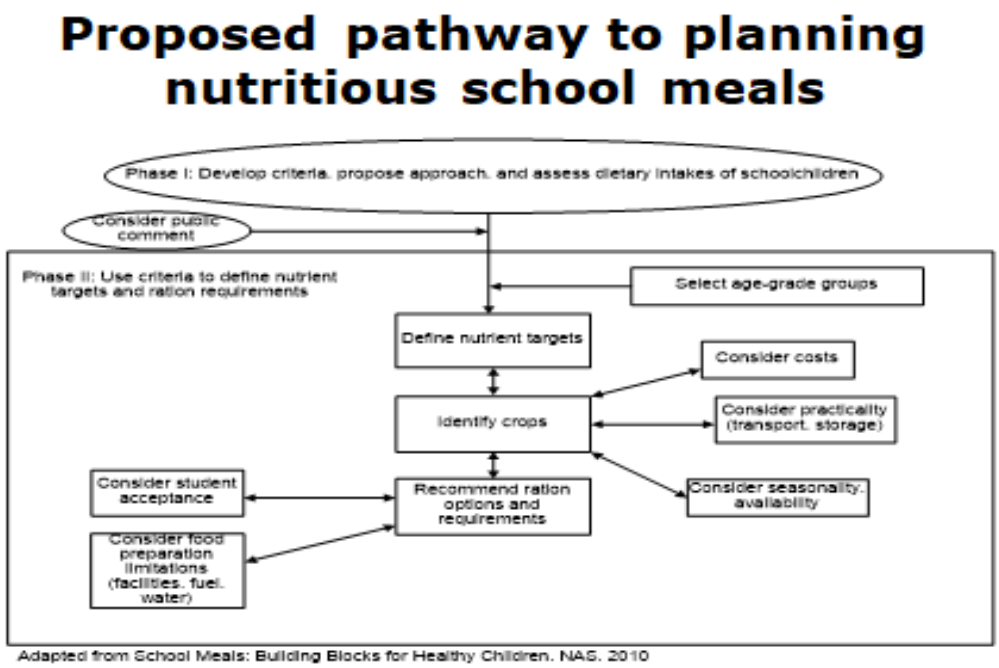
ANNEX 1: Menu Planning Guideline



(Source: Galloway, 20120)

The diagram above illustrates the different components that must be taken into consideration when planning school meals. The key menu planning considerations include; -

1. The age group to be addressed through school meals to de defined
2. Nutrient targets for school children to be determined
3. Plan the menu and recommend the ration requirements
4. Identify the food crops to be used in the menu and consider

    a) Seasonality and availability: – specify substitution ingredients for meals in the different seasons

    b) Availability: It is not always possible to get all food items/ingredients locally but ensure that at least some of the foods selected (could be fresh vegetables) can be sourced from the local community

    c) Acceptability of foods by students. The meals should be locally relevant and acceptable to children, but also should be balanced to include neglected, underutilized but nutritious and affordable foods – e.g. millet, buckwheat, amaranth

    NB: Food processing/value addition helps to improve acceptability.

    d) Food preparation limitations i.e storage, cooking facilities, water and fuel situation, etc.

    e) Feasibility of meals: – try to make meals simple to prepare in order to ;

    - best achieve lower costs,

    - use fewer pieces of cooking equipment

    - achieve short cooking times.

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ANNEX 2: Home Grown School Feeding: Assessing the Context

Understanding the context within which HGSF is implemented is an important first step. As previously discussed, there is not a one size fits all approach to school feeding programmes, each context is different and needs a thorough assessment and analysis. Figure 2 presents some of the assessments that can be done within the 5 school feeding quality standards.

a) Countries may use different tools to assess different aspects of the design and implementation component; These include;

- The specific school population needs within the country (such as food security and nutrition problems, challenges related to access to education for both the girl and boy child), and determine ways that the school feeding programme may be used to address the needs,
- The food production potential or supply chain analysis, the overall situation of small holder farmers, their needs and challenges (production and market related challenges) (see Fig2 under design and implementation)

If a school feeding programme is already in place, it is necessary to assess/review the design and implementation aspects of the programme in terms of;

- Its stated HGSF objectives: Do they respond to the needs and aspirations of the people?
- Targeting: If programme is reaching the intended age group identified
- Appropriateness of Implementation model(s) being used and assess the tradeoffs, particularly paying attention to source of food, and procurement systems/methods applied.
- Scalability of programme.

Different assessments can be chosen based on need.

b) The institutional capacity and coordination standard will require a stakeholder analysis or mapping to ensure that the necessary sectors are involved, but also a review of the coordination mechanisms. For the different sectors to work well, there is need to review, develop or revise the mandates for the different role players to ensure clarity. At the same time developing joint work plans ensures better work flows and better efficiencies in the school feeding programme institution.

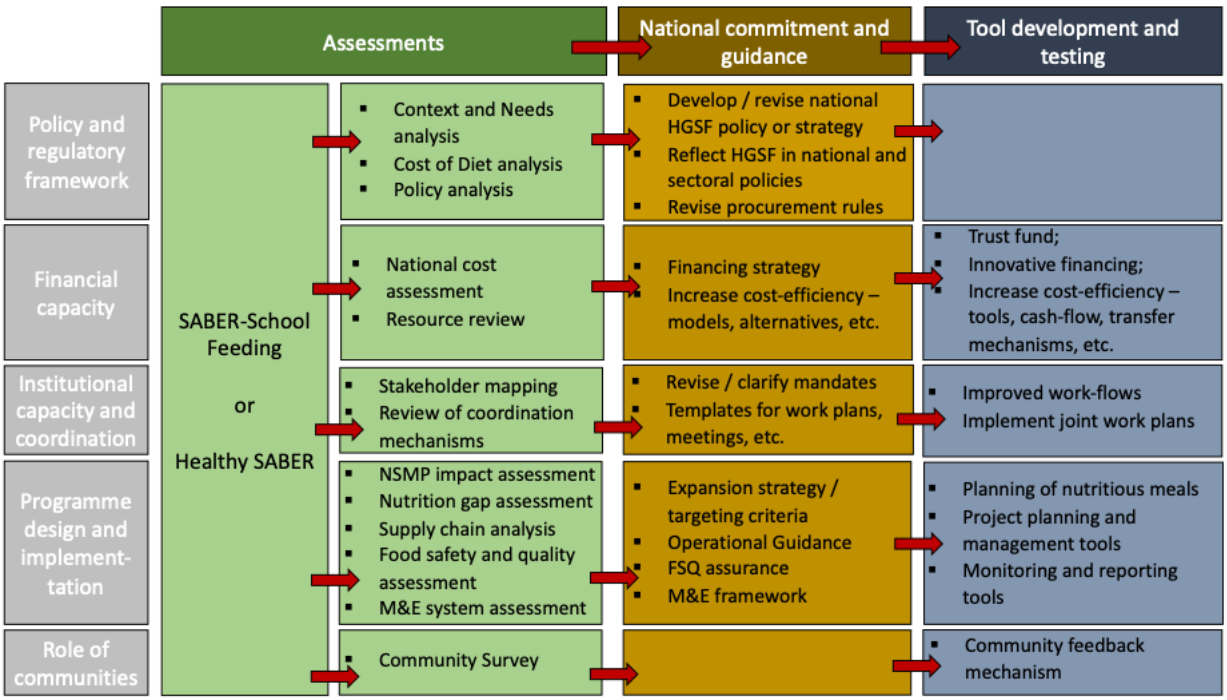

Figure 2: Assessments for HGSF Programmes in the context of Five Quality Standards

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c) Financing mechanisms. Here the assessment focuses on reviewing resources available but also the cost of school feeding. Examine the cash flows and transfer mechanisms but also the current challenges and mitigation measures

d) Policy environment:
Review the existing policy and strategy documents on school feeding, and related policy documents such as those on school health and nutrition and determine the gaps. It is important that there is at least a document to guide implementation (implementation guideline, and then work toward developing a specific HGSF policy. Procurement rules should be examined and revised as necessary.

e) Level of Community engagement and involvement: A community survey will help to assess the extent to which the community is involved, at what point they are involved in discussions around school meals, and in what activities they are involved in. For example if parents know what the children are being fed (quality and quantity), if parents show concern when children are not fed on a particular day, etc, and if the community/ parents are part of School feeding meetings.

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ANNEX 3: Home Grown School Feeding Procurement Models[15]

The type of procurement model used determines the extent to which farmers can be linked to the home grown school feeding programme. Procurement can be centralised or decentralised but there are variations to the models in these two extremes. At the same time procurement authorities can purchase food directly from farmers or farmer organisations, or through intermediary traders. In a HGSF programme model the ideal is to establish more direct relationships between farmers and their organisations and enable them to get better value for their food produce by reducing the intermediaries.

Centralised models: Here the procurement is predominantly handled centrally at the national government level and almost all commodities are purchased centrally.

Advantage:

i) Centralised procurement models have more standardised procedures, and facilitate quality control and monitoring.

ii) Easier to establish more stringent financial controls and monitor them

iii) Model provides opportunities for bulk purchases and therefore is likely to have lower prices due to economies of scale.

iv) Programme implementation is more standardised as the menu plan is the same

v) Centralised purchases reduce costs of developing human and institutional capacities because the people handling the procurement processes are fewer and centrally located.

Disadvantages;

i) Less likely to have a direct relationship with smallholder farmers.

ii) Requires storage and distribution facilities

iii) Requires more sophisticated and often rigid tendering and procurement procedures which may not be favourable for small producers.

Decentralised models. The procurement is decentralised to the provincial, district or school level . In the most decentralised model, food moves directly from the farm to the school. However in a decentralised approach it is important that payments to farmers/farmer organisations or to caterers (in third party models) are made within the shortest time possible as they operate within small financial margins. The farmers need to use the funds for inputs and labour in the next cycle of production.

Advantages:

i) A decentralised model is easier to adapt to local conditions and provides opportunity for linkages with local smallholder producers and generally benefits the local community more.

ii) Model may have greater challenges with financial controls and requires monitoring at many levels

iii) Facilitates the supply of fresh food to schools

iv) Easier to provide more diverse meals. Can accommodate local preferences.

v) This model has potentially lower transportation costs and may require less storage facilities as food is purchased more regularly.

vi) Information flow is more direct and delays can be avoided

[15] *This section has been adapted from the Home Grown School Feeding Resource Framework by FAO and WFP. 2018.*

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Disadvantages:

i) Many small purchases encourage inefficiencies in the system and more administrative work. However, this can be justified where the overall benefits outweigh this disadvantage.

ii) Quality control is much more difficult due to the increased number of suppliers to deal with in order to achieve the desired quantities of food.

Mixed models:- Are those combining advantages of both centralised and decentralised approaches. For instance some countries may choose to purchase certain types of products i.e cereals, centrally at the national or regional levels and then purchase fresh foods at the school level (a more decentralised level). Botswana started out using a highly centralised model to purchase all food products, but currently uses a mixed model where fresh fruits and vegetables in season, are purchased directly by schools, while bread and peanut butter are decentralised to Local Government authorities where the purchase is made by the District administration (Botswana case study, in Drake, et al, 2016).

Third party models: Here the procurement is delegated to a third party by contracting catering services to buy, prepare and serve the meals. Ghana and Nigeria are countries that use this model (see Ghana example below). To ensure linkage to smallholder farmers, procurement authorities can establish contracts that require that a certain percentage of the food used be purchased from smallholder farmers.

Advantage:

i) Model provides an opportunity to support smallholder production. Caterers may purchase directly from farmers or farmer organisations, or indirectly through traders who in turn purchase from the farmers. The use of traders requires that a mechanism is developed to track the origins of food to ensure that it is purchased from smallholder farmers.

ii) The caterers (who are often women) are strong beneficiaries of the HGSF programme in addition to the farmers and this potentially has a greater impact on household incomes.

Disadvantage: The caterer model requires additional measures to be taken to monitor the quality of food but also the food preparation conditions of many caterers. This may require more resources for monitoring.

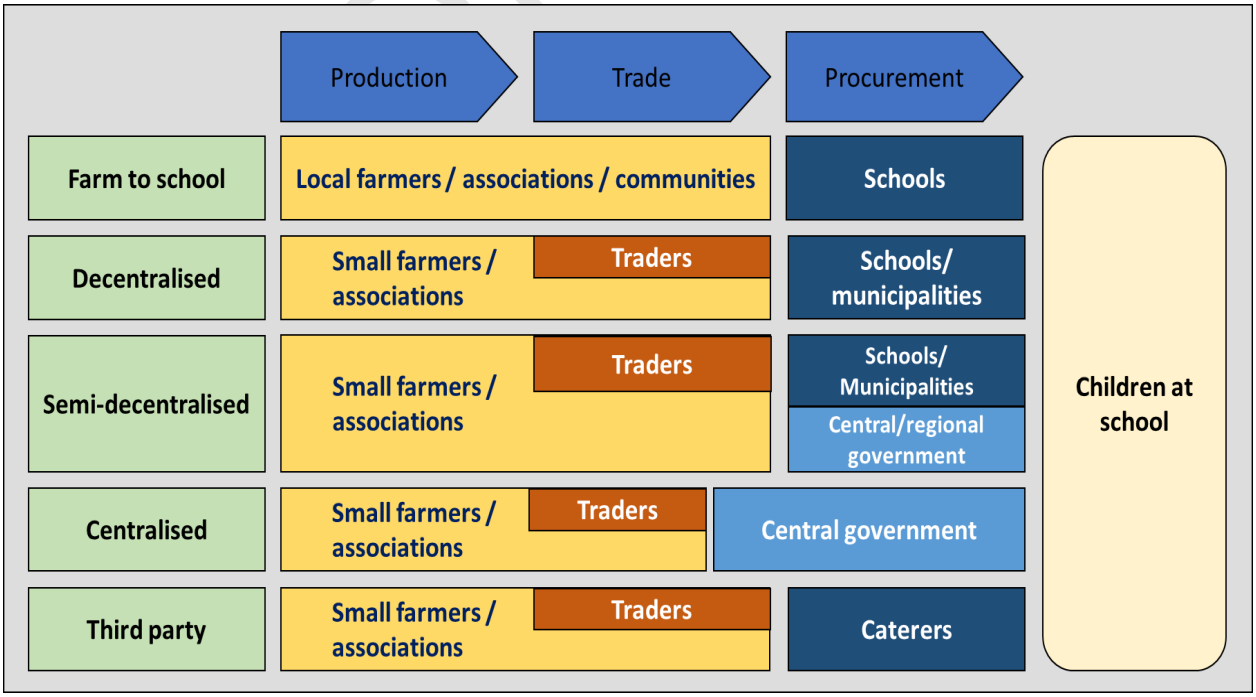

Figure 3: Types of HGSF Operating Models and Procurement Options

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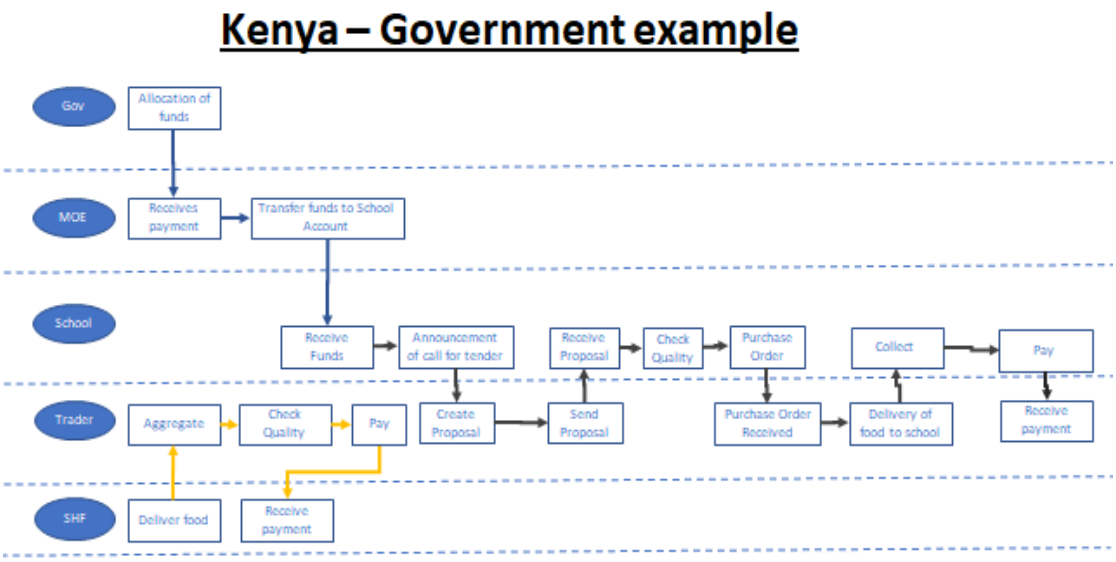
Diagram copied from the Home Grown School Feeding Resource Framework: Technical Document (FAO and WFP, 2018).

The diagram above represents the various models operating in different countries and illustrate the pathways through which food moves from farmers and farmer organisations and either goes directly to schools as the procuring entity, or goes via traders to the procuring authorities in central government (in fully centralised models), or in schools or municipalities in semi decentralised and decentralised models, to situations where food is purchased by caterers either directly from farmers, or through traders (third party model) and is prepared and delivered to schools. In considering which HGSF procurement/operating model to use, it is necessary to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each model as well as weigh the cost implications on the programme- (the type of procurement model used affects the cost of the programme). The decision on the model to adopt will depend on the context and what model is feasible looking at the tradeoffs. Ultimately, it is important to look at ways to benefit smallholder farmer suppliers. As mentioned in the document, different models can be used for different commodities in order to balance issues of transparency, accountability and smallholder farmer interests.

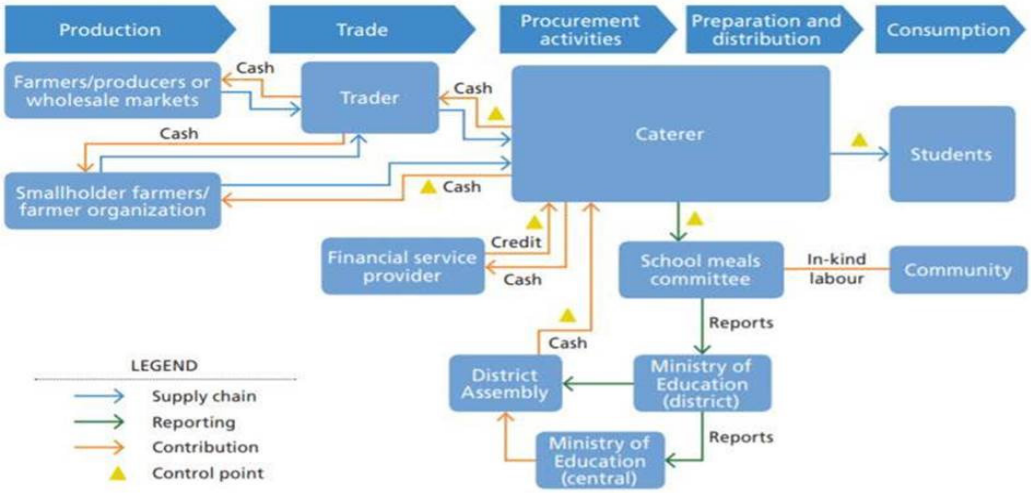
COUNTRY EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT HGSF OPERATING MODELS

1. Decentralised Model in Kenya with funds transferred to schools and purchases made at that level.



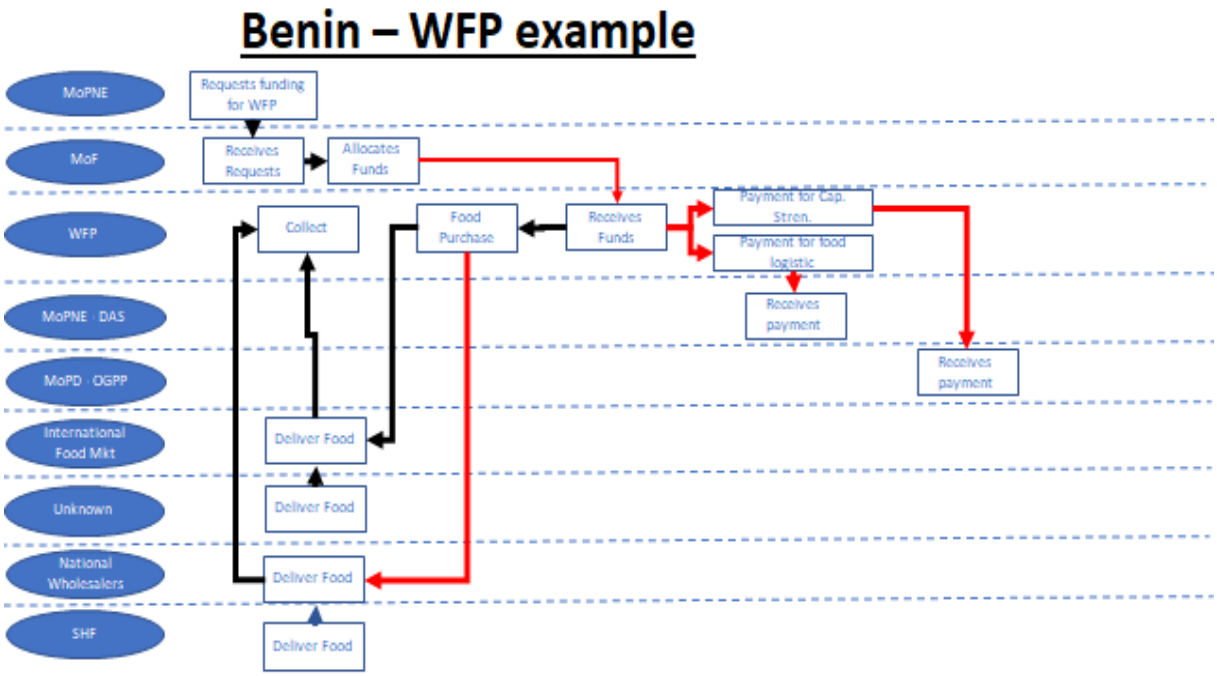
2. A Decentralised Third Party model in Ghana.

FIGURE 7 The supply chain for Ghana's third-party operating model for school feeding



Source: authors' elaboration.

3. A more centralized model in Benin with funding channeled to WFP for implementation.



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