



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING

RESOURCE FRAMEWORK

SYNOPSIS

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Children eating at their school (Benin) – © WFP/George Fominyen

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The HGSF Resource Framework is the result of collaboration by the World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF), Partnership for Child Development (PCD), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil (WFP CoE).

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FOREWORD

Innovative programmes based on systemic approaches, such as home-grown school feeding, are at the nexus of human capital development, local agriculture and rural transformation, and there is wide recognition of their multiple benefits in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is through broad-based collaboration in strengthening effective and sustainable national school feeding programmes and systems that true progress can be made in ending child hunger, ensuring that children receive the nourishment and education that will enable them to thrive.

The Home-Grown School Feeding Resource Framework has been produced to support the many countries implementing programmes for school meals with a local purchase or home-grown component. We are proud of our cooperating organizations for the extraordinary spirit of partnership demonstrated throughout the process of developing this new knowledge product, and we pledge to continue our partnership as we move forward.

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PREFACE

At least 368 million children in the world are fed daily at school through **school feeding programmes** that are run in varying degrees by national governments. School feeding not only nurtures children and improves their health, but is also key in facilitating access to education by increasing school enrolment, attendance and completion. In addition, the health and educational benefits of school feeding have a lifelong impact.

Many governments are increasingly sourcing food for school feeding locally from smallholder farmers in a bid to boost local agriculture, strengthen local food systems and move people out of poverty. As this so-called **home-grown school feeding (HGSF)** effectively augments the impact of regular school feeding programmes with increased food production and diversification as well as economic benefits for local communities, governments have identified HGSF as a strategy to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2). HGSF also facilitates inclusive and equitable quality education (SDG 4) and contributes to the empowerment of girls (SDG 5), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) and the reduction of inequality within and among countries (SDG 10). Finally, HGSF helps forge partnerships for sustainable development (SDG 17).

A large number of innovative approaches have been successfully tested and implemented in various country contexts at different stages of the programming and implementation cycle. Many examples of **good practices in HGSF** have been documented, but the resulting outcomes remain to be leveraged for impact at scale in line with the targets of Agenda 2030. Furthermore, many of these approaches faced financial, institutional and technological barriers as well as sustainability challenges, which limited their replication and expansion.

There is therefore a need for a more proactive approach to innovation and learning for scaling up existing successful HGSF programmes. Depending on the context, this may require a systematic approach to a number of challenges, such as: how to sustain and optimize the implementation of HGSF programmes already operating at scale; how to develop a successful HGSF pilot sustainably on a larger scale; and also how to develop a new HGSF concept designed for implementation under conditions that allow for scaling up.

To address these questions, the **HGSF Resource Framework** is aimed at fostering the development of a community of practice, to support replication, adaptation and expansion of successful HGSF models. The framework was developed for use by programme practitioners, policy-makers, development partners and governments, as well as civil society and community-based organizations and the private sector. It builds on policy directions from a 2009 publication,¹ and capitalizes on years of experience, and a comprehensive review and wide consultations among the partner organizations at global, regional and country level, as well as with experts and members of various governments and relevant stakeholders at the Global Child Nutrition Forum and other relevant venues for learning and policy dialogue.

¹ WFP. 2009. Home-grown school feeding.
Available at: <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/newsroom/wfp204291.pdf>

The HGSF Resource Framework means to provide governments and other interested stakeholders with practical guidance and examples that are specifically relevant for HGSF. It gives structure to the questions and aspects that have to be considered and addressed, as well as concrete examples and multiple references to more in-depth guidance. This should allow users of the framework to find inspiration, potential partners, additional guidance and support, as required.

As more national governments initiate and scale up investments in HGSF programmes, global partners are responding to the need to provide technical assistance for delivering effective, efficient and high-quality programmes. The World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF), Partnership for Child Development (PCD), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil (WFP CoE) have joined forces to create a **resource framework** for the design, implementation and scaling up of government-led HGSF programmes.

The resource framework harmonizes the existing knowledge, tools and expertise of the partners. It fosters partnerships to help governments achieve their goals and lays the foundation for a community of practice on HGSF for impact at scale.

THE RESOURCE FRAMEWORK AT A GLANCE

The Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) Resource Framework is a tool for policy-makers, practitioners, governments and stakeholders to help in designing, implementing and scaling up HGSF programmes. This synopsis summarizes the content and structured process of the framework, and provides guidance on the main considerations and elements relevant for HGSF programmes.

The main goals of the HGSF Resource Framework are to:

- ▶ clarify the key concepts, scope and goals of HGSF programmes;
- ▶ harmonise existing guidance materials; and
- ▶ provide technical reference for programme planners to design, implement and scale up effective, efficient and sustainable HGSF programmes.

The HGSF Resource Framework is structured in four modules.



MODULE 1 – Understanding HGSF: defines and explains the concepts, benefits and beneficiaries.

MODULE 2 – Planning HGSF: provides guidance in the planning of HGSF programmes that address national and local needs, are well integrated into the national context, are linked to local agriculture and nutrition, and build on existing opportunities and capacities.

MODULE 3 – Designing and implementing HGSF: includes guidance on different implementation options, including menu design, models for linking HGSF to local agriculture, and ways to ensure that programmes are delivered in a nutrition-sensitive, efficient and safe manner.

MODULE 4 – Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting: explains the issues that a comprehensive M&E and reporting system may want to consider, including direct community participation in programme monitoring, and proposes a set of indicators specific to HGSF programmes that may be used to monitor and evaluate HGSF programmes.

MODULE 1 UNDERSTANDING HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING



1.1**FROM SCHOOL FEEDING TO HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING**

School feeding programmes are generally considered to be education interventions that facilitate access to education and increase attendance and retention rates, while improving the nutrition of schoolchildren. Furthermore, there is evidence that school feeding programmes contribute to children's learning and health, increasing their productive potential later in life. Especially when school feeding is part of a larger package of investment in education, it helps maximize the return on this investment and contributes to reducing poverty in the long term.

School feeding benefits can be further increased by leveraging the institutional demand associated with school meals to support local smallholder farmer production through local purchases. Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programmes emerged as an opportunity to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and local communities, and to strengthen the nexus between nutrition, agriculture and social protection. Linking schools to local production can complement other national efforts to strengthen food production and diversification, and can be an important element in the transition to sustainable national programmes that are widely supported by stakeholders in different sectors and at different levels.

There is a growing focus worldwide on delivering healthy meals to children, while at the same time stimulating local agriculture and economies through the procurement of food from local, small-scale producers. Countries increasingly recognize that social protection measures, including school feeding, are needed to reduce and/or prevent poverty and hunger, and that connecting programmes to agriculture through institutional procurement programmes can further increase benefits, particularly for family farmers who are the backbone of agriculture in low- and middle-income countries but, nevertheless, are often poor and work on a small scale.

HGSF programmes enable the development of nutrition-sensitive and inclusive food value chains, which maximize benefits for all the involved stakeholders and play an important role in shaping and strengthening sustainable local and national

food systems. Defining a national strategy for HGSF can help identify policy and investment entry points to mainstream nutrition-sensitive interventions along the value chain – with regard to how the food is produced, processed, marketed, distributed and consumed – and identify the collective and individual roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders. Moreover, linking school feeding programmes to local production and development also increases community involvement and support, which is a crucial element for long-term programme sustainability.

1.2**CONCEPT**

Linking schools to local production is not necessarily a new concept. Many countries have developed different ways of creating this link, depending on the context, the capacity of farmers to supply schools, and different degrees of community participation.

The distinctive and innovative element of HGSF programmes, compared with traditional school feeding programmes, is the prioritization of smallholder farmers in a way that maximises sustainable benefits on prices, opportunities for commercialization, market linkages and access to productive assets for smallholders and other stakeholders along the value chain. HGSF is not strictly limited to the purchase of local products for schools from smallholders, but is usually designed to achieve nutrition-sensitive objectives and includes complementary interventions for farmers and communities.

HGSF programmes support smallholder farmers and agriculture in two main ways: by establishing strategic procurement and creating a structured demand for locally produced food; and by integrating additional, complementary interventions in order to enable smallholder farmers to participate in school feeding markets.

HGSF is a multi-sectoral model that can be implemented in different ways. Design and scope differ in each country depending on the model used to link schools to local production, their context and the objectives they intend to achieve. In order to harmonize the different conceptualizations of HGSF and establish a common understanding, the partners collaborating on the resource framework define HGSF as follows:

Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) constitutes a school feeding model that is designed to provide children in schools with safe, diverse and nutritious food, sourced locally from smallholders.

The core elements of this definition can be detailed as follows:

“Safe, diverse and nutritious food” means that HGSF programmes:

- ▶ promote the design and adoption of quality and safety standards for fresh and local foods;
- ▶ support crop and dietary diversification;
- ▶ integrate food and nutrition education for behavioural change, and to support culturally appropriate, healthier eating habits.

“Sourced locally from smallholders” means that HGSF programmes:

- ▶ maximize benefits for smallholder farmers, by linking schools to local food production;
- ▶ strengthen the capacities of smallholder farmers and communities to produce food;
- ▶ contribute to rural transformation.

Even if only a percentage of food is purchased locally from smallholder farmers, a school feeding programme can be considered as “home-grown”, provided that local purchases are designed to support and foster local agricultural and food markets, and that these objectives are taken into consideration during programme design and implementation, and institutionalized in related policies and regulations.

BOX 1

THE EMERGENCE OF THE HGSF CONCEPT

2003: African governments decide to include school feeding programmes that source food locally from smallholders in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) launches home-grown school feeding pilots in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia. HGSF is recognized by CAADP and NEPAD as an initiative that promotes food security and rural development.

2003: The Government of Brazil launches the Zero Hunger Strategy, which includes the Food Acquisition Programme (*Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos – PAA*).

2005: The Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC) recognizes HGSF as a key intervention in its Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and the Eradication of Hunger 2025.

2005: The United Nations World Summit recommends the “expansion of local school meals programmes, using home-grown foods where possible” as one of the “quick-impact initiatives” for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

2005: The Millennium Project’s report, a practical plan for achieving the MDGs, recommends the “expansion of school meals programmes to cover all children in hunger spots using locally produced food by 2006”.

2009: The Government of Brazil reforms the National School Feeding Programme (*Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar – PNAE*), to require that at least 30 percent of the food used is purchased from smallholders.

2015: FAO’s *State of Food and Agriculture* report identifies HGSF as a “win-win” solution that supports family farming through social protection.

January 2016: African heads of state declare that “HGSF is a strategy to improve education, boost local economies and smallholder agriculture, and advance the Sustainable Development Goals”.

1 March 2016: The first Africa Day of School Feeding is dedicated to HGSF as a key strategy for achieving the SDGs.

9 September 2016: The declaration of the Global Child Nutrition Forum in Yerevan states that “home-grown school meals should be pursued as priority programmes by governments, ensuring adequate ring-fenced budget allocation as appropriate for the country context and based on studies and analyses”. Numerous GCN Forum Communiqués had previously highlighted the importance of HGSF.

2016: The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) recommends connecting smallholders to markets by implementing institutional procurement programmes for food purchases by public institutions, food assistance programmes and school feeding, including during protracted crises and conflicts.

1.3

BENEFICIARIES AND BENEFITS OF HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING

In addition to the educational and nutritional benefits typical of school feeding, HGSF programmes have additional benefits, not only for children, but also for households, smallholder farmers, processors, traders and government.

HGSF programmes are well poised to be part of a comprehensive package of interventions that address multiple needs as identified by national

governments. They can also be integrated into national strategies to fight poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and increase health and health-seeking behaviour. Governments are therefore increasingly investing in HGSF programmes as a strategy for combining benefits in education, social protection, health, nutrition and agriculture, as well as economic and agricultural productivity and intergenerational well-being.

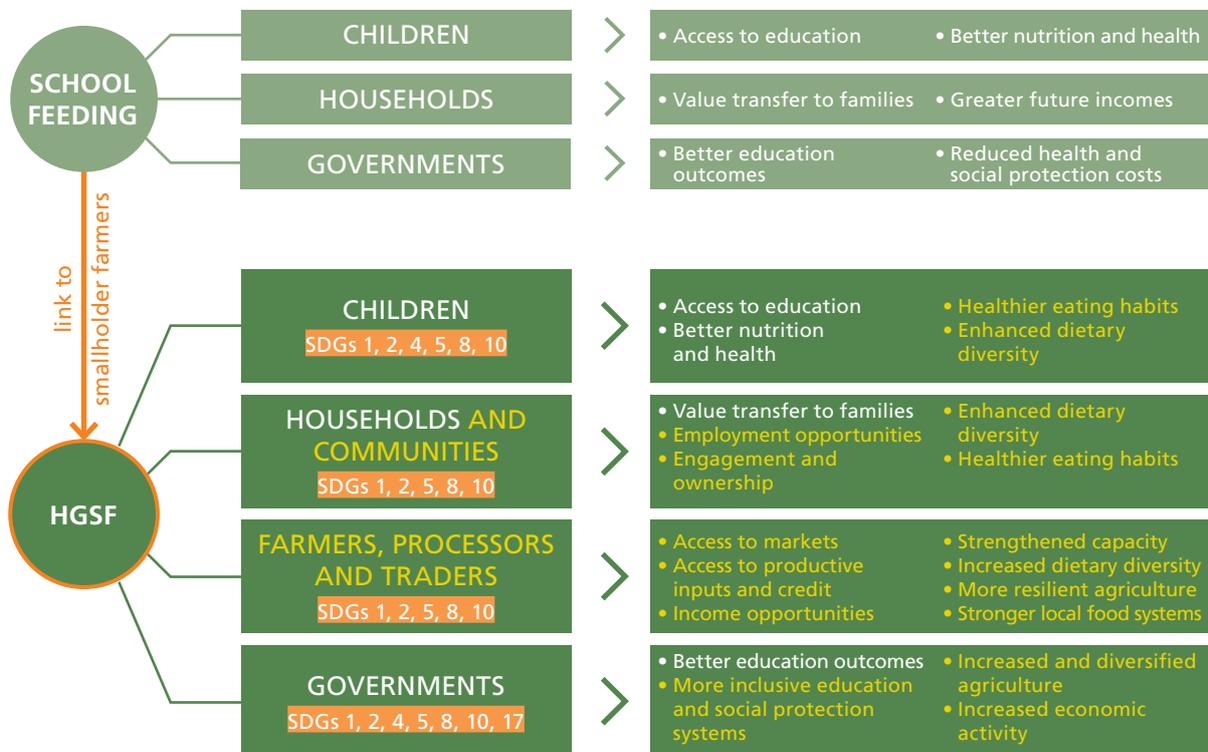
Through all of these benefits, HGSF can contribute to a number of SDGs.

BOX 2

EXAMPLE OF THE PROGRAMA NACIONAL DE ALIMENTAÇÃO ESCOLAR (PNAE) IN BRAZIL

Brazil's National School Feeding Programme (PNAE) aims to purchase at least 30 percent of nutritious food for school meals from local small-scale farmers. The programme, which reached 41.5 million children in 2015, is part of the Zero Hunger project and is enshrined in the country's constitution. Additional key success factors of PNAE are its inclusive policy and smallholder-friendly procurement procedures, which facilitate small-scale farmers' participation, and the strong coordination it fosters among the ministries of education, agrarian development, social development, agriculture and health.

FIGURE 1 Beneficiaries and potential benefits of school feeding and HGSF



Source: authors' elaboration.

SDG 1: *Social protection and poverty reduction*

- ▶ HGSF can contribute to the four dimensions of social protection, with additional benefits for participating farmer households, caterers and communities.
- ▶ HGSF programmes may generate sustainable benefits for a range of stakeholders along the value chain.
- ▶ Benefits to local communities may include job creation in support of food delivery and preparation of school meals, and at other points in the value chain.
- ▶ Food supply may create opportunities for the private sector and civil society organizations.

SDG 2: *Food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture***a. Enhanced food security and nutrition of schoolchildren and their communities**

- ▶ Direct effect on schoolchildren's food consumption, dietary diversity and nutritional status, by granting access to nutritious foods and providing macro- and micronutrients that are often missing from children's normal diets.
- ▶ Smallholders and their children can benefit from HGSF through increased and diversified food production and incomes.
- ▶ HGSF can contribute to increased dietary diversity by relying on a varied range of local products.

b. Smallholders' productivity and income

HGSF can provide enabling conditions for smallholders' increased market engagement by mitigating the risk associated with investing in increased and diversified agricultural production, aiming at greater surpluses, or investing in increased efficiency and post-harvest handling of food. Specific benefits can include the following:

- ▶ **Increased income**, as increased and diversified local demand may encourage farmers to increase investments, increase and/or diversify their production and further engage with additional markets.
- ▶ **Price stability**, as the stable HGSF market may help reduce price volatility, allowing for better and longer-term planning and investment.
- ▶ **Farmers' organizations**, as structured demand tends to promote cooperatives or farmers' associations, which enhance farmers' ability to connect with markets.
- ▶ **Capacity building and quality requirements**: as farmers have to produce higher-quality food to meet HGSF standards, they do not only grow better foods, but can also achieve higher prices when selling any surplus and can expand their activities.
- ▶ **Access to other formal and private markets** through strengthened capacity of farmers to produce more, better and more diversified products.
- ▶ **Efficiency** through reduced costs and fewer complications related to transport.
- ▶ **Reduction of post-harvest losses** of food purchased and prepared locally for schoolchildren.

c. Sustainable food systems

Home-grown approaches may foster local economic and agricultural development, contribute to diversifying local production, introduce environmentally friendly and nutrition-sensitive agricultural practices, and value local dietary habits and ingredients, ultimately contributing to building robust and efficient food systems.

SDG 4: *Education*

- ▶ Better access to schools.
- ▶ Increased attendance of schoolchildren.
- ▶ Increased learning capacity of schoolchildren – ability to concentrate because of reduced short-term hunger, and increased cognitive capacities through better food and nutrition.

SDG 5: *Gender equality and* **SDG 10:** *Reduce inequality*

- ▶ Narrowed gender gaps in education.
- ▶ HGSF can support rural women's production and incomes; foster women's participation in farmers' organizations, and reinforce rural women's self-confidence, knowledge and skills through training and learning.

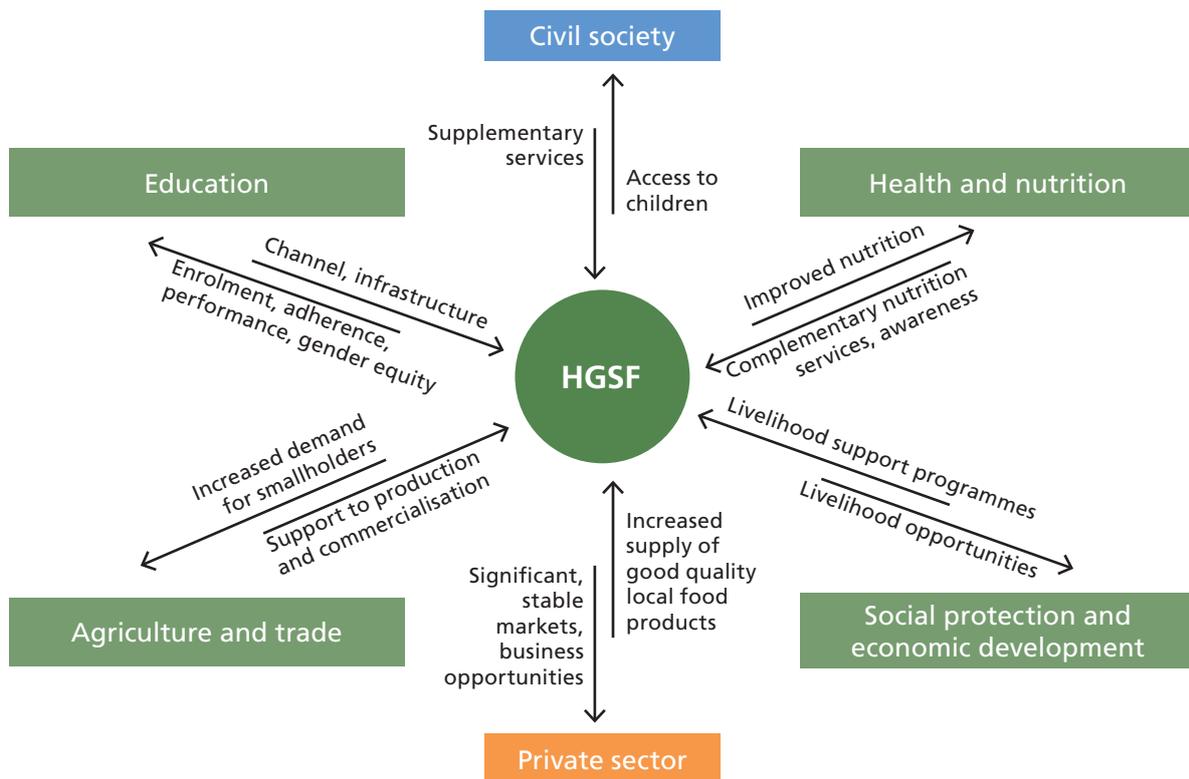
In addition to the benefits for the specific groups highlighted above, it is important to note that HGSF can also have additional, positive **multiplier effects** for more diffuse groups of people, such as small farmers, traders, small and medium rural enterprises, or other actors along the value chain who achieve higher incomes. The more local these actors are, the more they will spend their additional income in the local economy, increasing business for other providers of goods and services. Furthermore, as they expand their businesses, they generate spin-off benefits such as increased turnover and profits for others such as traders and transporters, and possibly employment and income for additional staff.

Many of the above benefits could be partially achieved through other programmes in a more

cost-efficient way, i.e. individually. It is therefore the **combination of many benefits** through the same programme that constitutes the real strength of HGSF. By combining different benefits, school feeding including HGSF programmes can achieve a very high **cost-effectiveness and benefit-cost ratio, and the marginal costs of achieving additional benefits are comparatively low** if compared with pursuing these benefits through specific individual interventions.

The potential benefits that HGSF programmes can generate are maximized when HGSF programmes are designed as a multi-sectoral intervention and are integrated into broader national social protection systems, including coordination mechanisms facilitating each sector in both contributing to and benefiting from the programme.

FIGURE 2 How HGSF can contribute to and benefit from different sectors



Source: authors' elaboration.

MODULE 2 PLANNING HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING



Each HGSF programme should be context specific, in order to be tailored to the needs of the population and to the capacities of the government and other relevant national actors. This is why the design of an HGSF programme involves a structured analytical process, including the following main elements.

Planning and designing an HGSF programme should take place on the basis of two main building blocks:

- ▶ a long-term **vision and political commitment** – defining the broad and long-term changes that the stakeholders, and in particular the government, want to achieve with HGSF;
- ▶ adequate and precise **context analysis and assessments** – exploring the needs that can be addressed by HGSF in the country, and understanding the different existing environments and opportunities that can support the vision.

The context analysis should encompass three main aspects:

- ▶ needs of the population that the programme could address;
- ▶ existing opportunities in terms of local food production and systems that could be used by the programme;
- ▶ existing implementation framework – this aspect should also include an assessment of the relevant existing policies and programmes that form the framework within which the programme will function.

To ensure the necessary support, ownership and ultimately the sustainability of the programme, all steps involved in the planning of an HGSF programme should ideally be carried out through a **multi-stakeholder national dialogue**. This involves different sectors of government at different levels, civil society, the private sector and communities in discussion and agreement on the overall vision for the programme, and the priority needs to be addressed, as well as the existing opportunities and capacities on which the programme can build.

2.1

VISION AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT

Vision and political commitment are essential to ensure that an HGSF programme can be developed and implemented to achieve the long-term change envisioned by the government.

Governments develop their vision and their political commitment for a certain programme on the basis of evidence of multiple, tangible benefits and the assurance that “it can be done”. They obtain this evidence by collecting and exchanging information and experience, including best practices, through different means.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) facilitates the sharing of knowledge and experience, contributes to the strengthening of country capacities and opens a national dialogue at political and technical levels. It can take place through different channels, including:

- ▶ international and regional fora and events such as the Global Child Nutrition Fora or the WFP Centres of Excellence regional and national workshops;
- ▶ regional and sub-regional communities of practice such as the Pan-African School Feeding Network and similar networks in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean;
- ▶ technical assistance and policy advice;
- ▶ peer-to-peer study visits.

SSTC has played a major role in conveying evidence, knowledge and information on HGSF by creating different regional networks and fostering new bilateral collaboration among countries with experience and interest in HGSF programmes.

South-South Cooperation also reinforces governments’ leadership in and ownership of capacity building processes. Experiencing HGSF’s tangible benefits can foster political commitment and form an entry point for assistance to enhanced and improved policies.



Module 2

2.2

CONTEXT ANALYSIS

A good understanding of the context is critical for the success and sustainability of any programme, but particularly for an HGSF programme because of its cross-sectoral nature. This understanding helps to identify existing needs as well as the potential to establish or scale up an HGSF programme to reach a higher number of vulnerable beneficiaries, increasing the share of food being purchased locally and from smallholders, while recognizing associated risks.

A comprehensive context analysis helps establish or review the objectives and targeting of the HGSF programme. It should be composed of:

- ▶ a **needs assessment** of the vulnerable population in terms of food security and agriculture, education, nutrition, health, economic poverty, job creation, social cohesion and social protection;
- ▶ a review of the **existing food systems and potential food production** by local agriculture and value chains involving smallholder farmers, which could contribute to and benefit from HGSF;
- ▶ an assessment of the **existing national capacities** to make the programme

function, involving a general assessment of the national capacities for the programme, as well as a series of more in-depth assessments, where these are necessary.

The context analysis phase can rely on primary and secondary data from relevant ministries, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders as well as research institutes.

Needs assessment

It is important to establish prevailing needs, with a focus on school-age children and adolescents, as well as on smallholders and other poor households potentially involved in the supply of school feeding programmes – in terms of poverty, social protection, job creation, food security, nutrition and health, and education. The assessment should consider:

- ▶ trends (is the situation improving or becoming worse?) and seasonality (variations during the year);
- ▶ gender and social inequalities – some groups may be particularly affected, such as pastoralists, specific ethnic groups, orphans, internally displaced people and refugees;
- ▶ other vulnerability determinants;
- ▶ regional disparities and rural development.

BOX 3

FOOD SYSTEMS AND FOOD VALUE CHAINS

A food system consists of all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outcomes of these activities, namely nutrition and health status, socio-economic growth and equity and environmental sustainability. Every aspect of a food system influences the availability and accessibility of diverse, nutritious foods and thus the ability of consumers to choose healthy diets.

A food value chain consists of all the stakeholders who participate in the coordinated production and value-adding activities that are needed to make food products. In a value chain, the emphasis is on the value (usually economic) accrued (and lost) for chain actors at different steps in the chain, and the value produced through the functioning of the whole chain.

Value chain analysis examines each step from production to consumption and provides an inclusive framework for characterising many dimensions of a food system, including agricultural production, the diversity of food supply, and food affordability.

Example of a HGSF value chain



TABLE 1 Aspects that can be considered in a food system assessment

Food production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identification of candidate crops, including relevant traditional and regionally adapted crops that are currently undervalued but suit both cultural habits and nutritional needs (local availability and nutritional properties). ▶ Present smallholder production and food balance (by candidate crop), present cultivated area, average plot sizes, average yield. ▶ Surplus areas, potential production capacity of smallholders in deficit areas. ▶ Smallholder capacity to increase diversity and productivity. ▶ Seasonality and availability of food, etc.
Food handling, storage and processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Efficiency and effectiveness, including degree of post-harvest losses and potential food safety risks (e.g. contamination or spoilage). ▶ Extent, capacity, state of and access to infrastructures (roads, aggregation points, warehouses, mills, primary processing units, etc.). ▶ Nutritional value of traditionally consumed local foods and relevant existing food value chains in the country. ▶ Food processing and fortification capacity.
Food trade and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Capacity of farmers' organizations, traders, transporters, processors, caterers, food safety and quality inspection services, packagers, etc., to service HGSF food needs. ▶ Volume of food markets and any gaps. ▶ Degree of integration of market systems with a view to the prices of school food basket items and alternative items on different markets, and food price fluctuations. ▶ Food price information systems (existing, weak, none), in the whole country and by sub-region, related to school food basket items and alternative items. ▶ Security situation across the year, and in relevant sub-regions of the country as relevant for sourcing and delivering school food (stable, unpredictable, etc.).
Consumer demand, food preparation and preferences	<p>With regard to HGSF, the most important aspects in this domain concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Involvement of the school community in setting school menu preferences. ▶ Capacity and feasibility of preparing safe and nutritious meals including, for example, food preparation facilities. ▶ Whether nutritional value, food preparation requirements/habits, or other aspects of a dish make it more preferable for inclusion in a school menu than others. ▶ Knowledge, attitudes and practices of the food service personnel, school staff, caregivers and schoolchildren regarding school food and its preparation.

During the design phase, governments will have to decide **which** of these needs and potential policy gaps they wish to address by the programme (objectives), and **how** (menus, linking smallholders to schools, building an enabling environment).

Existing food systems and potential food production (agriculture and agribusiness)

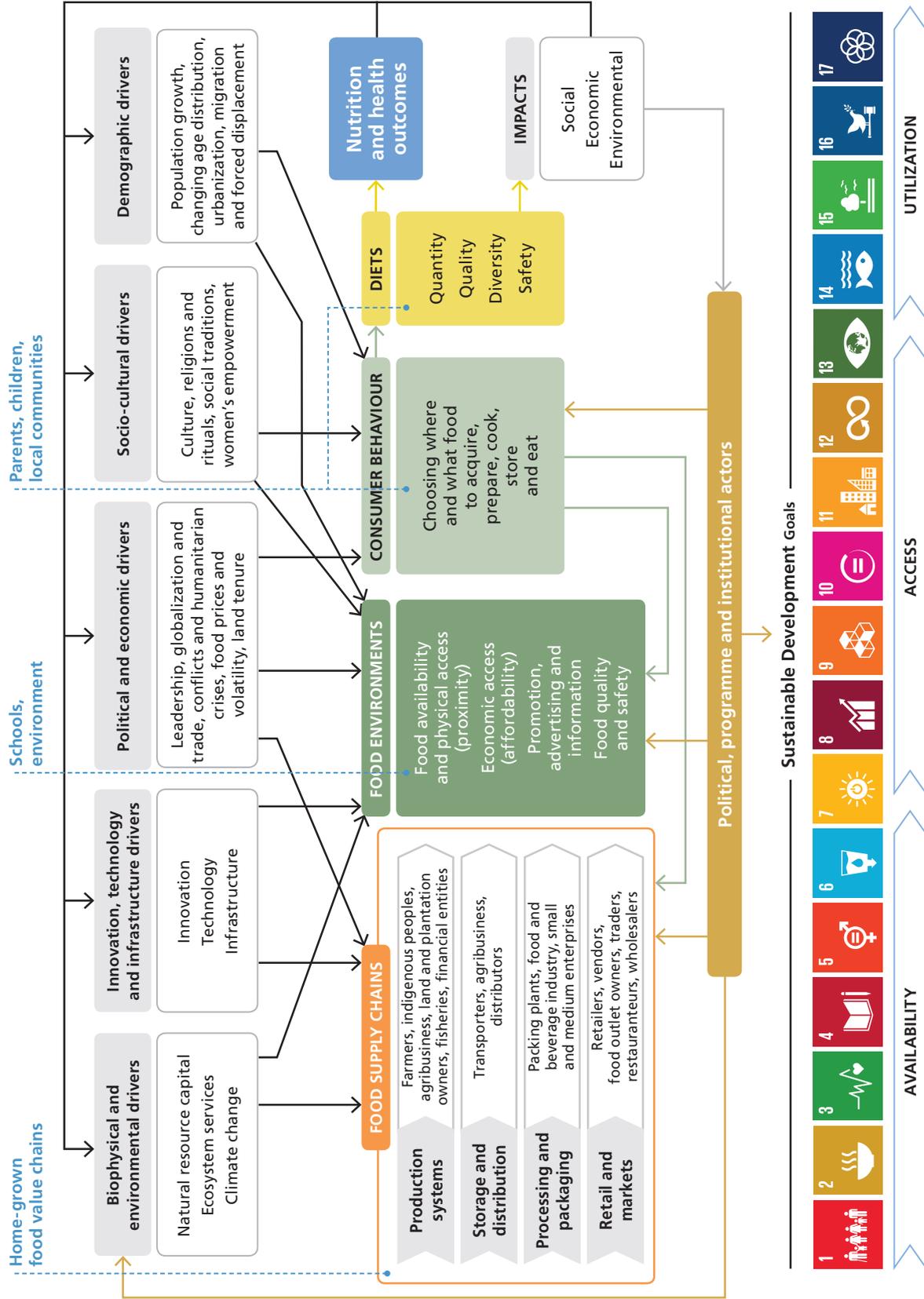
While an HGSF programme can strengthen local food systems, it has to take their present state as its point of departure, and build on their potential for improvement.

Food systems provide crucial entry points for HGSF, as illustrated in Figure 3. At the same time, HGSF can contribute to sustainably strengthen food systems by the stable demand it creates, and the support to smallholder farmers and organizations to produce more, better food that corresponds to safety and quality standards also for larger markets.

For HGSF, the most important aspect is the present and potential local food production of smallholder farmers, since the design of menus (composition and quantities) should be oriented towards the kind of food and the quantities local farmers can actually supply now and in the medium term. Also other aspects such as markets and aggregation systems are important to understand for the selection of the most conducive operating model for an HGSF programme. Aspects to be considered in this assessment are included in Table 1.²

² HGSF planners should seek the advice and cooperation of experts from other sectors, as required, e.g. in the Ministry of Agriculture.

FIGURE 3 Illustration of food systems with Home-Grown School Feeding entry points



Source: adapted from HLPE. 2017. Nutrition and food systems.

Assessments of existing national capacities

An assessment of the implementation framework will, in most cases, be based on an assessment of an existing national school feeding programme. This will help to understand existing strengths and weaknesses; the programme's efficiency and operational capacity, and its alignment with the national context and goals; and, in particular, which structures, systems, tools and partnerships the HGSF programme could build on, and which areas need strengthening.

To assess an existing national school feeding programme, many countries use the Systems Approach for Better Education Results – School Feeding (SABER-SF) methodology. SABER-SF assesses five dimensions of the existing system and operational capacities, to identify opportunities and challenges for HGSF:

- ▶ National policy and regulatory framework.
- ▶ Financial capacity and stable funding.
- ▶ Institutional capacity for implementation and coordination.
- ▶ Design and implementation.
- ▶ Community participation and the role of other non-state actors.

This overall assessment may reveal specific domains for which an additional in-depth assessment may

be useful, in order to understand the challenges better and explore options to address them.

Such additional assessments could include:

- ▶ an operational review of programme implementation (bottlenecks, performance, etc.);
- ▶ an assessment of relevant value chains and supply chains;
- ▶ a cost analysis of an existing programme and future possible HGSF models with a view to cost efficiency (main drivers of programme costs, and possible ways of reducing them) and cost effectiveness, including impacts on the local economy;
- ▶ existing and potential synergies with social protection and development programmes;
- ▶ a review of information management and existing monitoring, reporting and evaluation capacities.

In line with the dynamic nature of HGSF programmes, it is necessary to highlight that the development and recurrent adaptation of an HGSF programme is an **iterative process**: the programme should be regularly reviewed and revised, if required, based on different assessments and evaluations, to optimize the performance and sustainability of the programme.



MODULE 3

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING



The planning steps and assessments described in Module 2 lay the foundation for the design and implementation of an HGSF programme.

It may be useful to summarize – and formalize – the basic design features of the programme in an operational strategy. This clarifies the objectives of the programme; the menus it provides; how it ensures food safety and quality; how it links smallholder farmers (and other value chain actors) to schools; how it addresses gender issues and risks; how it maximizes benefits through synergies with other programmes; and how an enabling environment for a sustainable programme is built.

The operational strategy translates the vision into a plan with a concrete set of actions aligned with national objectives and the programme's goals. It should be directly based on the evidence obtained through the assessments described in Module 2. By examining the fundamental aspects of school feeding in a country, an operational strategy can determine to what extent the programme is:

- ▶ responsive to the needs of the population;
- ▶ feasible in terms of capacities and resources;
- ▶ aligned with the policy directions and strategies of the government – in particular, the areas of education, social protection, health and nutrition, and agriculture;
- ▶ implemented in an efficient way, with a realistic view of how to obtain adequate financial resources in the short and long term, and how to involve (and build) robust operational capacities.

The strategy may also include dynamic elements, for example starting with menus that can be provided immediately, while setting targets for more varied menus that will become possible once the programme has led to increased and more diverse production by local farmers.

The development of the operational strategy should be led from the start by **one single task force or inter-ministerial committee** representing the different ministries and other stakeholders involved in the programme, in order to warrant the continuity and national ownership of the approach, and mitigate risks related to staff turnover.

The most important elements of a national HGSF strategy are described in Figure 4.

3.1

OBJECTIVES

No programme can address all the identified needs of a population. The objectives of a programme clarify the needs it will address, which of the multiple potential benefits of HGSF (see [Module 1](#)) it will focus on and, for example, the order of priority. Achieving clarity and agreement among all programme stakeholders on programme objectives is fundamental for:

- ▶ rallying cross-sectoral support by clearly showing the potential benefits that the programme will generate for each sector;
- ▶ justifying requests for potential amendment of existing policies, strategies and programmes;
- ▶ justifying the allocation of adequate resources to the programme;
- ▶ identifying adequate indicators to be monitored, in order to ensure credible documentation of the extent to which assumed benefits of the programme are in fact generated.

3.2

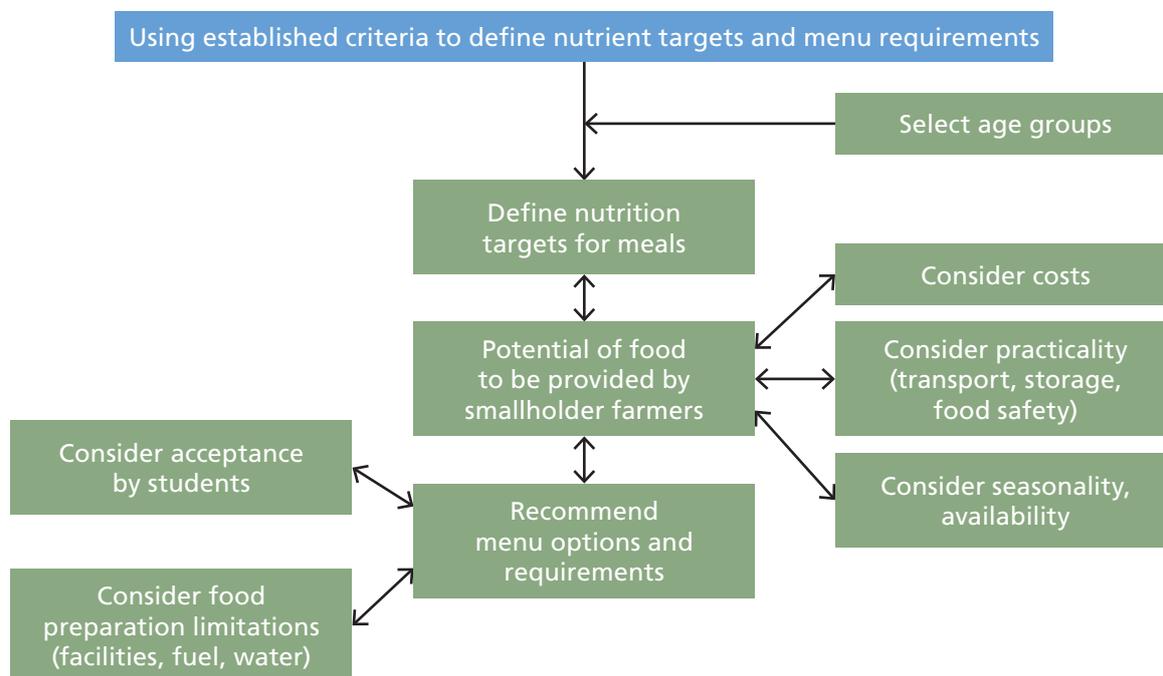
MENU DESIGN

The design of menus is one of the most important steps when embarking on HGSF. Programme designers have to consider a number of criteria for menu development, including:

- ▶ programme objectives;
- ▶ nutritional requirements of target beneficiaries;
- ▶ food consumption patterns and traditions;
- ▶ existing national (food-based) dietary guidelines;
- ▶ existing and potential food produced by male and female smallholder farmers;
- ▶ seasonality;
- ▶ price;
- ▶ storage and handling requirements;
- ▶ vulnerability to food safety and quality issues;
- ▶ preparation challenges.

Broadly, the planning process involves assessing the nutritional requirements of the target group, setting recommended nutrient targets (or limits) to be covered by the school meals; and developing patterns or food combinations that can achieve these targets as a basis for defining the menus.

FIGURE 4 Using established criteria to define nutrient targets and menu requirements



Source: adapted from **IOM (Institute of Medicine)**. 2010. *School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children*.

A second step establishes to which extent the different foods that can (presently or potentially) be provided by smallholders fulfil these requirements.

In addition to the criteria mentioned, when determining the possible food combinations to cover the set nutrient targets for menu planning, dietary diversity considerations should also be prioritized, by aiming to ensure a variety of foods from key food groups.

Some countries have developed additional materials such as cookbooks, which translate nutrition guidelines into easily accessible hands-on guidance on how to provide healthy and balanced school meals.

Where such guidelines do not yet exist, or need revision, technical partners and South-South and Triangular Cooperation may be sources of support to help governments develop these guidelines.

BOX 4

EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL FEEDING MENU BOOKS FROM CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND TAJIKISTAN

Côte d'Ivoire has developed a compilation of menus based on home-grown commodities. It proposes 29 nutritious menus that respect the food habits of its communities and provide at least 40 percent of the proteins, energy and other nutritional needs of school-age children. The compilation also serves as a guide to inform and train school canteen stakeholders on nutrition and food hygiene.

Tajikistan has developed a 202-page cookbook with 127 traditional Tajik recipes. The dishes aim to provide a varied and healthy diet for children, while adhering to local traditions and considering the availability of simple and affordable ingredients.

Several organizations have developed different tools that could be helpful when composing different menu options. The most relevant tools in the context of HGSF include the following:

- ▶ NutVal.
- ▶ School Meals Planner.
- ▶ Cost of Diet.
- ▶ Optifood.
- ▶ Food Composition Tables.

3.3

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY

Food safety and quality are crucial for any school feeding programme, not only for HGSF. Food safety is a non-negotiable aspect, since unsafe food will prevent the full achievement of goals to improve food security and nutrition. The provision of nutritious and fresh foods increases the need for good food hygiene, which comprises conditions and measures necessary for the production, processing, storage and distribution/preparation of food to ensure a safe, wholesome product fit for human consumption.

Smallholder farmers typically produce mainly for themselves or for sale in more or less informal markets. Therefore, they are often not used to prioritizing food quality and safety issues. However, when food is procured from smallholder farmers for HGSF (or other institutional food programmes), it is crucial that food quality and standards are observed.

Food safety and quality have to be ensured in all elements of the supply chain, i.e.:

- ▶ on the farm;
- ▶ during transport;
- ▶ during processing;
- ▶ at school (on delivery, during storage and during meal preparation).

This will often mean interventions to strengthen the capacities of schools, farmers and other stakeholders in the supply chains to manage, transport, store, use and handle fresh products properly and safely in order to guarantee the quality and safety of the food to be distributed in schools.

Farmers, aggregators and other actors along the supply chain should be trained in best practices for safe post-harvest handling, storage and food

management. They may also need help in making certain investments, e.g. by facilitating their access to affordable credit.

Schools require adequate infrastructure and adequately trained staff or service providers to store food and prepare meals while respecting hygiene and safe food handling to guarantee that children consume good-quality and safe food. The combination of good hygienic practice during food preparation with systematic training on and supervision of hygienic food consumption (such as washing hands, eating from clean plates and with clean cutlery) is a crucial part of promoting the healthy eating habits of schoolchildren, which they will take with them after their schooling.

Another important consideration is that national and local capacities to control food safety and quality may need to be strengthened.

3.4

LINKING SMALLHOLDER FARMERS AND PROCESSORS TO SCHOOLS

The link between school feeding and local production is the defining element of HGSF. To ensure that a programme effectively makes this link, programme planners should establish:

- ▶ the target group of smallholders that the programme wants to link to its market;
- ▶ how institutional procurement ensures that this target group effectively participates in the HGSF market;
- ▶ the operating model most conducive in the specific context to facilitating the link between HGSF and local production;
- ▶ how reliable transport from smallholders to schools can be ensured;
- ▶ the potential complementary (supply-side) support to be given to smallholders.

Target groups

Targeting smallholders is at the heart of HGSF. However, the definitions of **smallholders** or **family farmers** vary considerably between countries. Nevertheless, there is a set of criteria that is commonly used to define family farmers. These include:

- ▶ area of cultivation;
- ▶ household management;
- ▶ income level.

A registration and certification system with specific requirements for the classification of smallholders, such as the family farm register adopted in Brazil, can be a good strategy to identify and operationalize inclusive policies for smallholders and guarantee their access to HGSF programmes.

At the outset, an HGSF programme should target smallholders already capable of supplying schools with surplus food production. The sizeable and stable nature of the demand from HGSF programmes can stimulate smallholder farmers to invest in increasing, improving and diversifying their agricultural production, which brings about improved livelihoods and higher, steadier incomes. The constant demand from schools creates a pathway to increased productivity, food security and income security. For this reason, it is critical not to rely only on farmers that already produce regular surpluses, but also to include those with the **potential** for increased production. Farmers who at present have limited capacity should be supported with targeted interventions (see section on supplementary support below) that unlock their potential.

An HGSF programme can establish additional targeting criteria among smallholder farmers to promote specific objectives by focusing, for example, on:

- ▶ farmers producing **food of particular interest** to the programme, e.g. eggs or plant protein, orange-flesh sweet potatoes, leafy greens;
- ▶ **female farmers** (see more details in section 3.5 on gender considerations);
- ▶ farmers producing food from **organic and agroecological systems** to support forms of agricultural production that ensure environmental sustainability, while also providing healthy food that is free from pesticides.

In addition to farmers, HGSF can target other actors along the value chain, including local food processors, caterers and cooks.

Procurement

Public procurement is normally governed and specifically regulated by detailed national rules aiming to ensure the efficient use of public resources, guarantee the best value for public money, and ensure open competition and

transparent procurement decisions. Moreover, these rules should prevent fraud, waste, corruption and local protectionism in connection with public procurement of goods and services.

Public procurement rules often follow complex procedures, including specific requirements for tendering and decision-making. These complex rules are some of the main barriers for smallholder farmers to access the market represented by school feeding programmes.

It is therefore crucial for HGSF to adhere to procurement rules that facilitate the participation of smallholder farmers and smallholders' associations in the procurement process by reducing these barriers, while guaranteeing programme efficiency, thus ensuring a stable, affordable and timely supply of diverse, safe and quality food to schools through transparent and accountable procedures.

Possible interventions to achieve this facilitation include:

- ▶ recognizing award criteria beyond the lowest price, i.e. allowing the procurement of food for a school meal programme based on a **combination of factors**, such as the price on the one hand, and social, economic and/or environmental benefits on the other, with each category accorded a specific weight in the overall decision to award a contract;
- ▶ adopting reservation, preference and/or indirect procurement strategies that enable, for instance, **school food contracts** (or a percentage of them) to be awarded only to smallholder producers.

In addition, an HGSF programme can promote the participation of smallholders through **soft tenders** and **direct contracting**.

Lengthy public payment procedures also often exclude smallholders from participating in institutional food procurement. An HGSF programme could consider certain administrative adjustments to help reduce the time that smallholders have to wait for payment.

Operating models

The choice of operating model, i.e. how the programme is implemented, has a strong influence on whether a programme is able to achieve its

objectives and maximize benefits in a cost-efficient way. There is no model that fits all contexts. Countries have developed their own models, based on their specific context and objectives, and different models may coexist even within one country. In order to identify the most appropriate model, it is important to consider that each model has its advantages and trade-offs in terms of benefits for farmers, schools, children, quality of food, cost efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Operating models can be centralised or decentralised with many possible combinations and variations. Procurement may be directly from farmers or their organisations, or through traders as intermediaries.

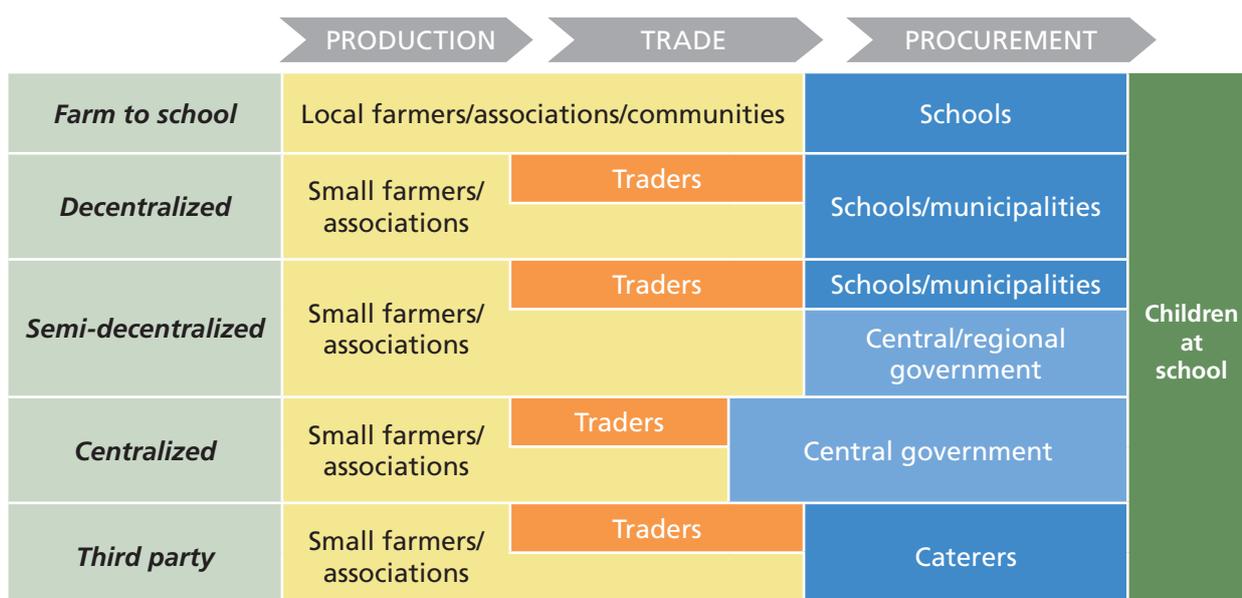
It is crucial that the operating model developed for an HGSF programme be adapted to the country context, taking into consideration a series of different factors, including the country's size, prevailing economic and market structure, government structure, volume and type of food required, beneficiaries' needs, and institutional procurement capacities.

In principle, **decentralized models** may be easier to adapt to local conditions and opportunities. The higher the degree of decentralization, the greater the opportunities for local-to-local linkages, with spill-over effects for the rest of the local community. Furthermore, a decentralized system facilitates the supply of fresh food, generally increasing the variety of food, and its compatibility with local habits and tastes.

By contrast, **centralized processes** may ensure greater standardization of procedures, facilitating monitoring and control which, in principle, should enable more stringent quality control. On the other hand, centralized procurement of large quantities of food through a few contracts could increase interest in manipulating the procurement processes.

In the case of **third party models**, governments have a chance to support smallholder production, even if they do not purchase products directly from the smallholders. Third party models mean that governments do not have to establish the capacity of food procurement, but instead focus on the role and capacity of managing contracts with specialized caterers, ensuring that they purchase efficiently and

FIGURE 5 Generic overview of different centralised, decentralised and third party operating models



Source: authors' elaboration.

effectively from smallholder farmers in an inclusive way that benefits the farmers in terms of timely and fair payment and fair access.

Transport

Transport and logistics requirements often prevent smallholder producers from participating in an HGSF programme, since they may have limited capacity to transport their products. This represents a significant operational barrier for smallholder producers in accessing government food procurement schemes. Therefore, it may be necessary to adapt delivery conditions for the supply of food from smallholder producers at least until their transport capacity is strengthened, either through complementary support, or as an effect of their increased market participation and income opportunities. Ways of promoting the chances of smallholders to fulfil transport and logistics requirements include:

- ▶ use of **short supply chains** (SSCs), thus reducing quantities, delivery frequency and the transport and logistics capacities required;
- ▶ use of **separate contracts** between HGSF and transport operators, relieving smallholders of off-farm logistics capacities but increasing the administrative burden of the programme;
- ▶ systematizing and training on **good practices**, making it easier for smallholders to understand and adhere to what is expected and required;
- ▶ further **capacity support for smallholders**, through complementary programmes, for example, such as the establishment of temporary storage and aggregation facilities, and access to credit to acquire means of transport.

Complementary support for smallholders

While all these measures are **necessary**, in many cases they may not be **sufficient** to enable smallholders to participate actively in an HGSF programme because of other underlying social, market, rural and agricultural development constraints, such as limited market information, limited liquidity, poor storage, limited processing and logistic infrastructure, and little access to technology and knowledge. Such constraints are common for farmers in the global south, also because of a broader spectrum of family farmers in terms of human and economic development, labour productivity, agricultural surplus production, and marketing.

HGSF programmes should consider how best to link smallholders to complementary interventions that address such constraints, with a view to fostering mutually reinforcing elements of demand and supply-side support. Such interventions should be designed and implemented under the leadership or coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant stakeholders and actors.

Complementary support programmes can involve the entire value chain from food production to post-harvest handling, processing and marketing, including interventions aiming at improving infrastructure, productive assets and inputs (including access to land and water), services, technology and knowledge, financial services, and the business environment as a whole.

3.5 GENDER

The contribution of women to agriculture and food production is highly significant. They are crucial actors in primary production along the food value chain and in the marketing of food products. However, in many parts of the world, women face specific constraints putting them at a disadvantage with men. Such constraints are mainly structural and grounded in unequal gender dynamics at household, community and market level. These constraints may often reinforce one another, creating a vicious circle of women's subordination.

An HGSF programme can address the effect of women's underprivileged position in several ways, for example by:

- ▶ supporting the capacity of farmers' organizations to mainstream gender or have gender quotas, ensuring that women actually benefit from their membership and have a voice in decision-making processes within the organization;
- ▶ supporting gender-sensitive capacity development, such as training adapted to women's needs by being conducted at times and in ways that are compatible with women's typical chores;
- ▶ increasing access to capital to invest in women's productive activities (for inputs, technology and additional labour on their farms, etc.), preferably on a revolving fund basis.

Governments can also use HGSF to address specific structural constraints for the empowerment of women at local or national level, such as improving access to land, water and other farming inputs for women. In these cases, the HGSF programme should form part of an enhanced approach and wider effort, and include explicit goals for gender transformation.

3.6

SYNERGIES WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES

The benefits of an HGSF programme can be maximized if it is closely linked with other related programmes, such as in the area of social protection, nutrition and health, agriculture and rural development.

Ideally, HGSF is complemented by **basic health interventions** providing access to clean water, age- and gender-appropriate sanitation facilities and products, hygienic measures including hand washing with soap, and deworming. These complementary interventions are not only of direct relevance in the school environment, but also offer an opportunity to raise awareness and improve conditions among families and community members. They have a direct, positive impact on nutrition. Therefore, an HGSF programme should be designed in close collaboration with the national health and water and sanitation sectors in order to capitalize fully on the nutritional opportunities of a favourable food environment in schools.

Nutritional awareness and education should always accompany HGSF, so that children learn about what they are eating and why they are eating it. This awareness will promote lifelong healthy eating habits. It is to be hoped that, as adults, these children will continue to eat balanced, diverse and healthy food.

Synergies with existing **agriculture programmes**, in particular the complementary support to smallholders described above, and programmes aiming to help farmers adopt climate-smart or nutrition-sensitive production practices should be actively sought, as they enhance the benefits of both interventions and make them more efficient.

Strong and beneficial synergies are also possible with **educational programmes** (improving curricula, teaching materials, teacher training and remuneration, school infrastructure, etc.) and **social protection programmes**. The latter could not only include safety net transfers to households (with greater values being transferred if household children attend school), but also programmes aiming at generating social and behavioural change to increase social equity, including gender equity.

3.7

BUILDING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR A SUSTAINABLE HGSF PROGRAMME

Any school feeding programme needs an enabling environment to achieve its objectives fully and remain sustainable. The SABER-SF exercise described in **Module 1** establishes the present state of the environment of an HGSF programme with respect to five dimensions: policy and legal framework; stable finances; institutional roles and coordination mechanisms; programme implementation; and the role of communities and other non-state actors. Any gaps or weaknesses identified by the SABER-SF assessment will need to be addressed by specific interventions to increase the chances of success of the HGSF programme. Some examples are given below.

Policy and legal framework

Given that HGSF programmes are multi-sectoral by nature, it is crucial that adequate links among the relevant sectors (education, nutrition and health, social protection, agriculture, rural development, market access, etc.) are established at policy level to ensure that each sector provides the necessary support and obtains all possible benefits from the HGSF programme. Where these links are absent, governments can develop a dedicated HGSF policy, adapt existing school feeding or social protection policies, or set up a system of interrelated policies and laws to cover the various programmatic aspects. In many countries, developing an HGSF policy creates an opportunity to develop a more comprehensive school health and nutrition policy, or to integrate HGSF fully within the national policy framework of social protection, agriculture, food systems, nutrition and health, etc.

Experience from different countries shows that in order to achieve results and sustainability, a policy should be aligned with and supported by a national legal framework. HGSF needs to build on and be integrated into the existing legal framework, for example for procurement from smallholders. There is a need for national or sectoral definitions (where they exist) of “family farmers” or “smallholder farmers” to inform the targeting; for regulation of producer organizations; health and safety regulations; contract law and enforcement; land tenure legislation; and tax legislation. These legal frameworks are not always in place or may be unfavourable to HGSF. Reforms may be necessary to align them with HGSF policy and its legal framework.

Stable funds and resources

Governments should seek to secure stable funding to guarantee reliable and effective programme implementation and sustainability in the long term. The HGSF policy or implementation framework should also regulate the flow and management of funds. HGSF programmes should have a stable and dedicated budget line, and the disbursements at different levels (national, district and/or school) should be timely. In this respect, it is important for governments to realize that HGSF is not only an education intervention funded through the Ministry of Education. In countries where national HGSF programmes are implemented, resources are also allocated by other relevant ministries such as agriculture, health, social protection or commerce. Where government involves different centralized and decentralized levels, it should be established whether, to what extent, and when each of these levels should contribute to programme funding. Innovative forms of resource mobilization, including public-private partnerships might be considered.

Where several actors are involved in resourcing the programme, the flow, planning and disbursement of funds should be well coordinated to guarantee the efficiency and effectiveness of the intervention.

Institutional roles and coordination mechanisms

HGSF programmes require different levels of coordination with government ministries and with local authorities, districts, municipalities, schools, communities, smallholders and other value chain actors. An HGSF programme should have an institutional home, which ensures that

the programme and its implementation are properly led and coordinated. Moreover, all the stakeholders mentioned above play important roles in procurement, cash management, quality and food safety control, education, management of teachers, etc., and the role of each relevant actor should be clarified.

Good coordination between relevant actors at different central and decentralized levels would ensure that required capacities, support and complementation by other programmes are available for the HGSF programme at the right time. Coordination should thus take place during both planning and implementation to ensure the success and sustainability of the programme.

What is specifically required varies from country to country, dependent on explicit contexts, actors and capacities. However, efforts to ensure the adequate capacity of local authorities, communities, schools and farmers should always be included in HGSF policy framework and programme design.

Programme implementation

All actors involved in the implementation of the programme need to have the capacity to carry out their tasks in a reliable and efficient way. In accordance with the programme design decisions in the operational strategy for specific menus, operating model and procurement processes, the relevant actors need:

- ▶ clear guidance on what is expected from them, and how they are expected to carry out their tasks;
- ▶ tools and systems that enable them to work efficiently, and minimize errors and possibilities for loss, fraud or other unintended uses of resources;
- ▶ training to grasp fully the guidance given, and appropriate skills to manage the systems and tools provided.

Involvement of communities and role of other non-state actors

The long-term sustainability of an HGSF programme depends to a considerable extent on the ownership and support of both communities and households. They should allow their children to participate in school and in sessions on nutrition and dietary awareness; be ready to diversify their food production; provide the programme with certain

resources (labour, fees for cooks, etc.); provide additional food for further diversity or in times of temporary pipeline breaks, and so on. Community ownership and support can be stimulated by:

- ▶ full involvement in programme design and planning (e.g. when discussing menus, the procurement processes) and monitoring;
- ▶ tangible benefits for communities and households, showing clear improvements for schoolchildren while also generating benefits for the local economy.

Other non-state actors to be involved in HGSF include national civil society, in particular

organizations capable of providing supplementary support; and the private sector (possibly as a donor, but also as a source of capacity support for smallholders or a political advocate for the programme).

The various elements for building an enabling environment for an HGSF programme should be agreed upon by the relevant stakeholders, and summarized within the operational strategy. Where relevant, this could be accompanied by a technical assistance plan including concrete activities to be carried out, identifying key partners and stating their specific roles in the process.



MODULE 4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION, AND REPORTING



Reliable and timely monitoring, evaluating and reporting serve to ensure:

- ▶ accountability as to use of resources;
- ▶ learning to allow informed and targeted management decisions and continuous improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of the programme;
- ▶ evidence of achievements, which forms the basis for successful sustainable resource mobilization.

An HGSF programme normally combines the objectives of a traditional school feeding programme (e.g. the educational, nutritional or social safety nets outcome) with the additional goals of home-grown aspects (e.g. smallholder farmers' access to and participation in a stable market).

The information gathered by a monitoring system must be analysed, summarized and presented in concise and timely reports to decision-makers, and shared with relevant stakeholders. Such analysis and reporting will only take place if there is a clear demand from the political leadership and higher management level for these reports, as well as tangible support for their quality and timeliness.

Consistent monitoring of and reporting on relevant indicators for the various objectives of the

programme form the basis for regular in-depth evaluations that analyse the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the programme. These evaluations should use the existing monitoring reports produced by the programme and triangulate their findings with additional information obtained through site visits, interviews with key informants at school, community and administration levels, as well as consultations with relevant partners. Any evaluation should aim to analyse observed developments with the goal of formulating concrete and constructive recommendations for the future design, integration and implementation of the programme. Any HGSF programme should secure adequate resources to ensure reliable and timely monitoring, reporting and evaluation at both community and national level.

4.1

DESIGN OF A MONITORING AND REPORTING SYSTEM

The design of an HGSF programme monitoring and reporting system should be led by government, guided by a working group of technicians from key ministries with, for example, support from South-South Cooperation and development partners. The system design could follow the four steps summarized below:

Step 1

Intervention logic: Based on the specific objectives of the programme, it should be established what information is to be captured by the system. One or more outcomes and corresponding indicators should be identified for each objective, and one or more outputs and corresponding indicators for each outcome. At this stage, each country needs to decide whether to revise any existing monitoring and reporting system of a national school meals programme to cover HGSF aspects as well, or whether it prefers to design a **new, separate system to capture only the additional HGSF aspects**.

Step 2

Design of data collection tools and system: The design process can be started by drawing up a visual chart of the desired flow of information from its initial collection to its points of quality control, aggregation, analysis, storage and reporting. Fundamental decisions at this point include to what extent a paper-based system of trickle up (with numerous potential sources of errors, omissions and non-compliance) could be avoided by using a more direct, electronic (and ideally online) system. Once the overall desired flow has been decided, specific data collection tools can be designed, and specific roles assigned to relevant actors. The system design should be an integral part of the programme's operational guidance.

Step 3

Monitoring and reporting capacities: It will be necessary to establish what infrastructure, skills and competencies are required to ensure that the system design is implemented as foreseen. Where capacities are not yet sufficient, specific measures should be identified to strengthen them.

Step 4

Using, sharing and learning: The entire system should be activated by high demand for the information and analysis it is expected to provide. System designers should be aware of this demand from the outset, i.e. what information is wanted by whom and for what use. They should ask themselves: Who should have access to the information produced? How will this information be shared and with whom? What information will be required and used for programme management and by whom? How will the information and analysis be used to extract lessons learned, and create an evidence base to improve programme performance?

As mentioned above, it is important for communities to be involved in programme monitoring to ensure that standards and regulations are respected and that the central level can keep track of what is actually happening countrywide. Besides systematic involvement of communities in the “intra-programme” monitoring system, it will also be useful to establish a parallel feedback mechanism to empower community members to provide direct feedback on the programme. This mechanism should be accompanied by clear information for communities as to how the programme is expected to function; measures aiming to protect those who report problems; and clear procedures ensuring that there is adequate follow-up to investigate and address any issues reported.

4.2 PROPOSED HGSP-SPECIFIC OUTCOMES, OUTPUTS AND INDICATORS

The following table proposes a list of potential outcomes and related indicators to monitor and report on HGSP. The list is not exhaustive – each programme will have its own elements. The two main outcomes for the home-grown components of the programmes are:

- ▶ increased market participation of smallholder farmers with quality and diversified products;
- ▶ school children’s access to fresh and diversified food.

Tool kit

The resource framework will be complemented by a collection of existing planning and assessment tools of the organizations involved in the partnerships.

TABLE 2 Overview of HGSP relevant outcomes, outputs and indicators

Outcomes and outcome indicators	Outputs	Output indicators
Outcome: Increased market participation of smallholder farmers (SHFs) with quality and diversified products		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Volume and value of sales from SHFs to targeted aggregators ▶ Number of SHFs who sold food to targeted aggregators ▶ Diversity of crops and animal products produced 	<p>Schools include food from SHFs in their menus</p> <p>SHFs, including women, are supported to produce quality food surplus that can be purchased for school feeding programmes</p>	<p>Number of schools covered by the programme</p> <p>Number of boys and girls covered by the programme</p> <p>Quantity of food provided through school meals</p> <p>Number of farmers who received support to increase and diversify their production and improve their productivity</p>
Outcome: Schoolchildren’s/farmers’ access to fresh and diverse food		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dietary diversity score and food consumption score for farmers ▶ Dietary diversity score and food consumption score for children benefiting from school feeding 	<p>School-age children benefit from school feeding</p>	<p>Number of girls and boys in relevant age groups who benefited from school feeding</p> <p>Amount of food provided by an average school meal, by food group (actual versus planned)</p> <p>Macro- and micronutrients provided by an average school meal, as percentage of daily requirements of children in the respective age groups (actual versus planned)</p>

WAY FORWARD: GETTING TO SCALE WITH HGSF – AND LEARNING

HGSF programmes can make a significant contribution to the achievement of the SDGs for food security, nutrition, education and health, as well as agriculture. These programmes represent a collective effort in pursuit of multifaceted targets under Agenda 2030, including human capital development to promote sustainable, inclusive economic growth and deliver tangible results through policies and programmes in childhood education and development, as well as universal health coverage.

The HGSF Resource Framework and the enhanced collaboration that it represents between the three Rome-based agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP) as well as with other crucial partners, is most welcome by governments. This collaboration is important for coherent support to governments and represents UN Reform and other efforts to improve efficiency and impact. The multi-sector and multi-stakeholder dimensions of HGSF programmes present significant win-win opportunities and entry points for value addition by public and private sector partners alike, in terms of both the upstream segments of the school meals value chains i.e. from farm to markets; and the downstream segments i.e. from market to schools.

Examination of the potential for collaborative work in the context of HGSF provides useful insights into the potential for building or expanding joint initiatives based on practical approaches for mainstreaming cross-cutting themes (nutrition, gender, youth, climate etc.). The process also opens opportunities for joint actions in areas of human capital development and rural and structural transformation necessary for the achievement of Agenda 2030 targets.

The HGSF Resource Framework presents a set of harmonized concepts, definitions and approaches to help shape a common understanding and mind-set among the national, regional, and international actors whose involvement is important for bringing HGSF to scale and for making its multi-sectoral benefits a tangible reality. It will provide a basis for purposeful partnerships for investments, policy dialogue and learning at the local, national and global levels.

In this respect, the Resource Framework forms the basis for an agreed-upon, multi-partner package of assistance, including assessments, strategy development, programme design and not least capacity strengthening with respect to policies, institutions, resources, programme design and implementation as well as community involvement as required to shape, strengthen and sustain national HGSF programmes at an ever-increasing scale.

HGSF functions in changing contexts, and partly aims at influencing these contexts itself. Given this dynamic nature of HGSF, targets, forms of partnerships, and opportunities will develop. Furthermore, a wealth of additional experience can be expected from the scale-up efforts of the coming years.

In order to keep the current momentum in the context of country-led processes as well as policy dialogue on the international policy arena, the partners involved in the elaboration of the Resource Framework recognize the need for prompt follow up action listed below, with support from the emerging community of HGSF practice:

- ▶ Jointly monitoring progress being made with scale-up efforts.
- ▶ Further identifying, unpacking and sharing good practice examples along the school meal value chains and the related incentives and accountability frameworks as needed to build the evidence and models for scaling up programmes and ensuring their quality and sustainability.
- ▶ Demonstrating the power of South-South cooperation and documenting and sharing the South-South experience.

- ▶ Mapping opportunities for linking ongoing or planned HGSF programmes at country level with relevant ongoing or planned interventions and investments in support of agriculture development and rural transformation.
- ▶ Updating and refining tools for menu planning, and making them more easily adaptable to local contexts.
- ▶ Exploring opportunities for linking the Cost-Benefit Analysis of school feeding programmes with the Cost-Benefit Analysis of rural investments programmes focusing on the upstream segment of school meal value chains and their multiplier effects linked to local agriculture.
- ▶ More accurately capturing and successfully reporting the cost-effectiveness of multi-sectoral HGSF programmes.
- ▶ Refining cost benefit analyses for the essential package of interventions – together with other relevant accountability tools such as community score cards and social audits, as well as other tools to facilitate operational synergy and thematic mainstreaming.
- ▶ Incorporating new evidence and experience, e.g. with respect to different operating models, or any other in particular innovative approaches, into the resource framework on occasion of regular revisions.
- ▶ Strengthening the investment case, creating fiscal space for school feeding programmes and laying the ground for sustainable impact at scale.

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HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING

RESOURCE FRAMEWORK

SYNOPSIS

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