WHAT ARE WE WORKING ON?

1. WORKPLACE NUTRITION

Workplace Nutrition offers clear incentives for business in terms of increased productivity of workers and improved nutritional outcomes. In Pakistan, SBN has prioritised workplace nutrition to engage and assist businesses to adopt improved nutrition in the workplace. It has piloted workplace nutrition initiatives with some members and is developing a country specific workplace nutrition toolkit so that workplace nutrition can be diffused across the industry through the coordinated efforts of SBN members and other forums.

2. ACCELERATING INNOVATIONS

Technological, product & business model innovations are lacking in agri-food systems in Pakistan, resulting in a lack of competitiveness, low incomes for smallholder farmers and high prices for consumers. SBN is working on facilitating and strengthening innovations in agri-food systems to improve nutrition. The SUN Pitch Competition has been launched to challenge SMEs to come up with innovative solutions and match them with technical assistance and funding opportunities.

3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SMES

SBN has conducted a study and workshop to understand what prevents SMEs in the food system from being competitive, expanding and ensuring safety & quality. Lack of technical knowledge, limited access to innovative financing & business development capability limitations were key constraint areas highlighted. SBN aims to increase technical assistance available to SMEs by transferring knowledge from global members and development services in the local market systems for the local players.

4. ENABLING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

SBN is working on developing tools to create evidence that will guide policies and regulations around strengthening the environment for improved private sector investment and participation in nutrition.

THIS QUARTER’S KEY UPDATE: SBN ELECTION 2019

SBN Pakistan conducted its election for the term 2019-2020 in June 2019. Dr Muhammad Nasir of Engro Foods Pakistan was elected Chair of the Executive Committee while Mr Ismail Suttar was elected Co-Chair.

The cabinet took oath at PC Bhurban on 25th June 2019. The new leadership stressed the need to expand the platform and strengthen collaboration with government to improve access to nutritious food, change consumption patterns and practices, and improve overall quality and safety of food in Pakistan.
**SUN PITCH COMPETITION PAKISTAN**

SBN Pakistan will launch its first national SUN Pitch Competition in October 2019. The theme for this year’s competition is ‘Rethinking Nutrition Innovations’, which aims to distil the current global and national discourse on food innovation to challenge and support SMEs in Pakistan. The competition aims to identify and scale up disruptive, relevant and commercially viable technological innovations that can improve the affordability of safe, nutritious and affordable foods, especially to vulnerable populations. This will be supported by crowing in the broader investment and development communities to channel investment towards the scaling up of transformative innovations in food systems that can spark a fundamental shift in the way food is grown and supplied to consumers by SMEs. The SUN Pitch Competition also aims to crowd in technical assistance partners that can support SMEs to develop and integrate new innovations into existing business models and effectively manage the associated risks and challenges in the adoption of food system innovations.

For further details, visit: www.sunpitchcompetition.com

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**WORKPLACE NUTRITION**

Two SBN members - Hub-Salt and Engro Foods Pakistan - have made commitments to implement workplace nutrition. With the technical support from GAIN, a workplace nutrition needs assessment was completed in June 2019 and workplace nutrition programmes have been designed. In the current quarter, these member companies will implement their workforce nutrition programmes.

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**SMES WORKSHOP**

A workshop on ‘Developing Roadmaps for Engagement with SMEs’ was also organized. Member of the Planning Commission on Food Security & Climate Change, Mr Muhammad Azeem Khan and Chief of Nutrition, Ministry of Planning & Development Reform & SUN Focal Point for Pakistan, were also present. Mr Muhammad Azeen vowed full support from the Government to strengthen SMEs in key agriculture sectors to improve nutrition in Pakistan. The workshop identified pathways for engaging SMEs. Moving forward, SBN will engage key market stakeholders in the ecosystems of the SMEs in the identified sectors.
It was found that SMEs can play a pivotal role in transforming the food system and providing safe and nutritious food to low-income and rural households as they are involved in each stage of the food value chain. Mapping of the private-sector channels showed that SMEs dominated the agro-food and ultra-processed food chains, while larger companies dominated the fortified food and food supplement streams. Five sectors, including dairy, rural poultry, aquaculture, fruits & vegetables, and ultra-processed food were analysed in depth to understand the existing gaps, needs, constraints and future potential. The analysis showed that SMEs did not fully understand their role in providing safe and nutritious food. Their focus remained on volume instead of quality. The needs of different sub-sectors and value chains also varied, highlighting a need for customised solutions while value chain innovations remained limited in scale.

The study also analysed the overall food SMEs ecosystem in the country. It categorised relevant market systems under technical, business development and financial services. The results showed that there was a need to shift from traditional models to modern, need-specific models. Lastly, it was recognised that SBN should adopt a systemic approach and work with key partners in the support market functions, downstream and upstream players in the identified value chains. Innovation systems, technical services, business development services, innovation finance, value chain finance and consumer awareness on the demand for these sector products identified key engagement areas.

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), the SUN Business Network (SBN) and the International Food & Beverage Alliance (IFBA) are implementing a multi-stakeholder pilot project to support the identification of industrially produced Trans Fatty Acids (iTFA) replacement solutions in Nigeria and Pakistan. Building on the current work of WHO, Heartfile and the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Reforms, SBN has commissioned a study on mapping the sources of iTFA and identify potential and alternate solutions. The assessment will strengthen the understanding of the iTFAs in the food value chain and enable SBN to devise strategies to capacitate SMEs to reduce/eliminate iTFA from their products. The study on the mapping in its final stages and key findings will be shared with relevant stakeholders once finalised.
ABOUT SBN

In 2010, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement was launched to support national leadership and collective action to scale up nutrition. The SUN Business Network (SBN) is one of the four global networks that supports SUN countries (along with the UN, Civil Society and Donor Networks). It is convened by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and further supported by an Advisory Group comprised of senior business leaders.

The SBN aims to reduce malnutrition in all its forms through engaging and mobilising business to act, invest and innovate in responsible and sustainable actions and operations to improve nutrition. The SBN provides a neutral platform to broker partnerships and collaboration between business and all actors on nutrition at a national, regional and global level.

SBN Pakistan seeks to increase the availability and affordability of safe, nutritious foods for low income consumers through capacitating businesses and other relevant stakeholders and incentivising positive business actions. SBN Pakistan focuses on specific areas in the food system including creating an enabling environment for businesses to act on nutrition, accelerating nutrition sensitive innovations and promoting cutting-edge and inclusive business models across the food system that address the constraints of different sectors that are important for food diversity and improved nutrition.

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