



# SUN Business Network Evaluation 2019

Commissioned by GAIN

## **Executive Summary**

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

BDS	Business Development Services
BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTA	Confederation of Economic Associations of Mozambique
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DSM	Dutch State Mines
EC	European Commission
EQ	Evaluation Question
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
IR	Inception Report
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
SBN	SUN Business Network
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDN	SUN donor network
SME	Small and medium enterprises
SMS	SUN Movement Secretariat
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition (Movement)
TA	Technical Assistance
UN	United Nations
UNN	UN Network for SUN
UVP	Unique value proposition
WFP	World Food Programme

## **Acknowledgements and Disclaimer**

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Full responsibility for the Evaluation Report remains with the authors, and the views it contains should not be attributed to GAIN or any other stakeholder.

## **Executive Summary**

### **Overview**

1. This Evaluation Report is for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network (SBN) Evaluation, 2019, commissioned by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) funded under the Making Markets Work programme<sup>1</sup>. The Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network is a global platform for business and nutrition – with a wide membership of over 600 multinational and national companies across its networks. The SBN is one of four networks integral to the SUN Movement (along with the United Nations, Civil Society and Donor Networks).

2. The evaluation was conducted between April and October 2019, with data collection undertaken at both the global and the country levels between June and end-September 2019. The evaluation was managed by the Knowledge Leadership Unit at GAIN and undertaken by an independent evaluation team from Mokoro Ltd and The Partnering Initiative (TPI).

### **Objectives**

3. As per the Terms of Reference, the evaluation aimed to serve two main objectives, namely to:
- assess the relevance, internal consistency, and feasibility of SBN's theory of change at the global and national levels;
  - assess progress across the impact pathway, from output through to impact level.

### **Approach**

4. The full evaluation approach and tools, as agreed with SBN and GAIN, are outlined in the Inception Report (IR) (July 2019). Accordingly, this is a theory-based mixed-methods evaluation, which included an extensive review of relevant documentation and in-depth interviews with key role-players (more than 100 were consulted).

5. Seven desk study reviews were conducted of SBN, in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Three Case Studies of SBN were conducted in country in Zambia, Indonesia, and Mozambique.

6. As identified in the IR and the terms of reference (TOR, see Annex 1 of the main report), there is a paucity of comprehensive information on outcome level data, and certainly insufficient data across the full length of the impact pathway. Moreover, in many instances the networks at country level are not sufficiently far along the impact pathway, so the issue of parsing contributions to noticeable achievements at outcome level or beyond did not fully arise.

7. Whilst the evaluation team were provided with information against each of the key performance indicators associated with the global logic model's results framework, this was

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<sup>1</sup> The Making Markets Work programme is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Irish Aid, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

not the case with respect to the national logic model’s results framework. As Table 1 below illustrates, most national SBNs have yet to capture data, even those platforms which have been in existence prior to 2019<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 1 SBN database compilation**

Country	Reporting date	Total No of business members	Total no. of businesses making commitments
Bangladesh	2019-June	6	6
Burundi	2019-June	No data	No data
Cambodia	2018-Dec	11	0
Cote d’Ivoire	2019-June	No data	No data
DRC	2019-June	No data	No data
El Salvador	2019-June	No data	No data
Ethiopia	2019-June	No data	No data
Gambia	2019-June	No data	No data
Guinea	2019-June	No data	No data
Indonesia	2019-June	32	No data
Kenya	2019-June	72	23
Lao PDR	2019-June	10	No data
Lesotho	2019-June	No data	No data
Madagascar	2019-June	12	No data
Malawi	2019-June	18	No data
Mauritania	2019-June	No data	No data
Mozambique	2019-June	98	55
Myanmar	2019-June	No data	No data
Nepal	2019-June	No data	No data
Nigeria	2019-June	95	95
Pakistan	2019-June	35	4
Peru	2019-June	No data	No data
Philippines	2019-June	No data	No data
Rwanda	2019-June	No data	No data
Senegal	2019-June	No data	No data
Sri Lanka	2019-June	30	No data
Tanzania	2019-June	141	14
Uganda	2019-June	No data	No data
Vietnam	2019-June	No data	No data
Yemen	2019-June	No data	No data
Zambia	2019-June	83	0
Afghanistan	2019-June	No data	No data
Lesotho	2019-June	No data	No data
Global Members		23	23
<b>Total</b>		<b>666</b>	<b>220</b>

Source: SUN Global Team

<sup>2</sup> The information contained in this table was provided by the KL team on 15 November 2019.

8. Nevertheless, and as we demonstrate in the discussion of findings below, there are instances where we were able to glean data on changes being influenced by SBN which allow us to interrogate the credibility and robustness of the SBN strategy at both global and national levels in line with the TOR.

### Key Findings

9. The evaluation set out to answer three critical questions, which we answer in turn as follows.

10. **How appropriate is SBN's purpose?** The evaluation found that the purpose of SBN, as outlined in the theory of change, appears generally appropriate, though with some caveats. Without the proactive and expert engagement of the global SBN team, it seems fair to state that there would not be national networks organising business around the specific topic of nutrition at national level, and that the global team is instrumental in making this happen. As an indication of the health and perceived value of the SBN by business, in early 2019 20 global companies recently reconfirmed their engagement.

11. However, there are some differences in emphasis around SBN's strategic purpose, and in the absence of an overarching single document or strategic purpose statement it was sometimes difficult to pin down a consensus view. Some interviewees emphasised the key role of the SBN in providing a 'neutral platform' to bring multiple stakeholders together around recognising and supporting the role of the private sector in nutrition. This is a *politically* complex role for national SBNs requiring, among other things, ongoing engagement with multiple non business stakeholders, in order to generate buy-in, raise awareness and sensitise others to the fundamental role of food producers and other companies in improving nutrition. Other interviewees focused more on SBN's key role in meeting the needs of member companies at both global and national level. This is a *technically* complex role for national SBNs involving issues such as increasing access to finance and match-making supply and demand on technical assistance and business development support.

12. SBN's theory of change in part reflects this strategic tension. There are pathways to impact around increasing the supply and demand for nutritious food, both of which emphasise technical functions. The pathway to impact around strengthening the enabling environment for the private sector role in nutrition speaks more to the political economy of SBN's operating environment, including engagement of and alignment with non-business stakeholders such as the other SUN Networks (i.e. collective effort by multiple stakeholders is more likely to bring about change in the enabling environment than efforts driven by a single network). In practice most of the activities and efforts of SBN, at least as identified through the evaluation, appear to focus more on technical elements – particularly at national level.

13. SBN's theory of change is outlined in more detail in a national and a global level logic model. The logic model at the national level is sufficiently adaptable and flexible to apply to different contexts and is considered reasonably feasible. The approach to the national and global systems, as outlined in their logic models, do align to each other, and it is clear how

what is depicted in the causal pathways<sup>3</sup> of the global model underpin the pathways spelt out in the national logic model. Our analysis of the application of SBN's theory of change found it to be relevant to the needs of country context, national SBN's have been consistent in application of the theory of change, and the key components of the Theory of Change have been consistently applied at the national level.

14. There was consistency among the global team about the unique value proposition (UVP) offered by SBN. At national level, however, the UVP was not as clear. The assumption that SBN provides a 'neutral platform that is not organised by the private sector' makes sense globally, but at national level many interviewees felt that unless the network was owned and driven by the business community, it would create limited value and sustainability for its member companies and the path to sustainability was unclear.

15. Based on publicly available information, no other similar entity at global level appears to have done so much work to think through impact pathways and present them in such robust logic models linked to private sector engagement in nutrition. Nor does any other entity have the same organic connection to the SUN Movement and other government accountability structures. The evaluation briefly considered two organisations doing not dissimilar work to SBN (the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and Partners for Food Solutions). Our comparison with these two organisations reflects the changing landscape, and also highlights that the challenges being tackled by SBN to address the enabling environment are highly significant and complex. However, as new entrants arrive in the space, it underscores the need to optimise and strengthen SBN's strategic focus and UVP in order to reduce the risk of duplication of effort, identify alignment and strategic partnership opportunities with new entrants, and increase the likelihood of collective impact.

16. **How effectively has the SBN Strategy, global and national, been implemented and what progress has there been along the intended impact pathways?** At the global level the implementation of the strategy has been relatively successful. Along the three key impact pathways of the global logic model progress has been solid albeit some challenges remain (as highlighted in Table 2 below). Nevertheless, successful interventions (such as restructuring the approach to global membership, leveraging finance, the Pitch Competitions, and promoting meaningful linkages for nutrition-related technical assistance (TA) and Business Development Services (BDS)) are all likely to contribute to impact.

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<sup>3</sup> Impact and causal pathways outline plausible pathways of how inputs and activities will contribute to development outcomes and ultimately the expected impact of an intervention.

**Table 2      Extent of the progress along the causal pathways of the global logic model.**

Logic Model Level	Action	Indicator	Assessment
Activities	<b>Develop tools for national SBNs to survey the nutrition-related TA, BDS and Finance needs of their members.</b>	Number of national SBNs using tools designed by global SBN team to survey their members' needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global team have developed/are developing more than 70 different tools (see Annex 7 of the main report for the full list).</li> </ul>
	<b>Survey and engage global providers of nutrition related TA, BDS and Finance for their readiness to support national SBNs</b>	Number of global support providers identified (disaggregated by business or non-business partner)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorous global membership renewal process introduced by SBN.</li> <li>• 22 Global companies agree to offer TA to national SBNs.</li> <li>• 20 investors join the Nutrition Africa Investor Forum to meet national SBN members.</li> <li>• Range of other investment opportunities introduced (Financial collaborations currently being explored between SBN global and 12 investment/ financial companies.</li> </ul>
	<b>Provide support and guidance for the establishment of new national SBNs aligned with relevant SUN Country National Action Plans.</b>	Number of emerging national SBNs which have received guidance documents from the SBN global team to establish their national SBN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As we note, there has been mixed success – where support has been strong (e.g. Mozambique) guidance has been followed effectively, others such as Malawi and Pakistan expressed interest in using the tools but admitted they had not had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with any of them.</li> <li>• It is also worth noting that the older SBNs such as Zambia, Tanzania and Nigeria have been operating for several years before the tools were developed, but their experience was part of the basis for the learnings which have helped in the development of the tools.</li> <li>• Kenya has been using the modified version of the membership form and the data base template to strategically drive the network membership.</li> </ul>
Outputs	<b>Relevant links and introductions established between national SBNs and global support providers based on</b>	Number of introductions established between global partners which have the potential to address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TA mapping has only been recently completed, nevertheless links have been made already to at least 12 national SBNs.</li> </ul>

Logic Model Level	Action	Indicator	Assessment
	<b>global and national TA, BDS, Finance surveys.</b>	BDS/TA needs of national SBNs disaggregated by business and non-business partners	
	<b>SBN advocates for adoption of workplace nutrition commitments based on SBN recommendations.</b>	Number of SBN global members which have workplace nutrition programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All global members, in order to meet membership requirements, have workforce nutrition programmes.</li> </ul>
	<b>SUN stakeholders have enhanced recognition of the value proposition of national SBNs.</b>	Number of global SUN stakeholders (CSO, UNN, SDN, SMS) that have provided technical assistance or funding support to national SBNs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wide range of donors and other members of the SUN movement have provided support (including Irish Aid, DFID, EC, BMGF, Government of Netherlands) albeit we note at the national level the in-country relationship between SBN and SUN movement is not always very strong.</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<b>Partnerships established with global partners which increase access to nutrition related TA, BDS and finance to national SBN members.</b>	Number of national SBNs that benefit from TA, BDS or finance from global partners (disaggregated by business and non-business partners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still in its infancy, but global companies such as DSM and BASF have been providing support to initiatives in, for instance, Mozambique (not initiated yet), and Zambia.</li> <li>• See also below the discussion of the trans-fat pilot projects being conducted in both Pakistan and Nigeria.</li> </ul>
	<b>SBN Members adopt workplace nutrition policies.</b>	Number of employees of SBN members reached through workplace nutrition policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SBN estimates that more than a million employees now benefit from improved workplace nutrition policies of its global members, albeit all these companies had to have a workforce nutrition policy in place before joining/re-joining SBN so it is not accurate for SBN to claim this has come about as a result of SBN membership.</li> </ul>
	<b>Potential national SBN host organisations (e.g. GAIN, WFP, businesses) develop a national SBN strategy or establish and fund a national SBN.</b>	Number of SBNs functionality index with a score of 5 (meaning fully functioning network) Percentage of SUN countries that have increased their SBN functionality score	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We note below that whilst it is true that there are networks with a functionality index score of 5 this is a very basic tool; it does facilitate comparisons across countries, but it does not really capture how vibrant a network is or how durable it is likely to be.</li> </ul>

17. Along the key impact pathways of the national level progress there have been some noticeable positive changes to which SBN has contributed. These achievements included platforms being created; engagement happening between the private sector and relevant government agencies and business associations; Business-to Business partnerships and linkages being created to address TA, BDS and financial needs of businesses; and businesses making commitments to address nutrition (albeit it is not known how many businesses at the national level have met these commitments). Other outcomes such as increasing production of nutritious foods and adopting responsible practices around nutrition have had limited uptake across the 10 countries we examined, albeit a small group of countries (such as the pilot studies with small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) producers on trans-fat replacement in Nigeria and Pakistan, an example of Business-to network support) have started activities that could lead to these expected outcomes.

**Table 3 Extent of the progress along the causal pathways of the national logic model.**

Logic Model	Action	Indicator	Assessment
Activities	<b>Evidence informed advocacy by SBN to stakeholders</b>	Number of meetings with relevant non-business stakeholders to clarify and encourage a role of business in addressing malnutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very little data recorded in databases, Mozambique reported one instance for example.</li> </ul>
	<b>SBN National Platform: Build platform for business engagement</b>	Number of SBN member convenings (meetings/events)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On average networks were convening 4 meetings per annum (albeit the Mozambique network convened 13 meetings in 2018, another 7 in 2019, plus an additional 5 Community of Practice meetings<sup>4</sup>).</li> <li>• Kenya had 2 business engagement meetings in 2019 and 8 trainings and CoP meetings for SBN members (through market place for nutrition project)</li> </ul>
	<b>Identify business needs for finance, technical assistance, business development support &amp; enabling environment/policy change</b>	Number of business members needs assessments undertaken (Technical or Financial Assistance, Business Development Support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the platforms have undertaken assessments of needs, but not necessarily of all members (e.g. in Nigeria about 25% of its members specified their needs, in Mozambique 50% of members' needs assessments undertaken, in Bangladesh about 60% of members' needs have been verified, and in Zambia all members were surveyed).</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Community of Practice sessions showcase how other members of a network are providing training and technical expertise to SMEs. These sessions often also include some specific training (e.g. learning more about how to run businesses that help transform agricultural potential into safe and nutritious food throughout the food system).

Logic Model	Action	Indicator	Assessment
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Links between global companies and SMEs at national level have been made already in at least 12 countries, this includes for instance global companies such as DSM and BASF providing support to initiatives in Mozambique, and Zambia.</li> </ul>
Outputs	<b>Informed government agencies</b>	Number of relevant government departments sensitised to role of business in addressing malnutrition through advocacy messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In every platform SBN is working with at least one government department such as the Zambian National Food and Nutrition Commission, the Ministry of National Development Planning of the Republic of Indonesia (Bappenas) in Indonesia, Mozambique's the Technical Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Security (SETSAN), and the National Fortification Unit in the Ministry of Industry in Bangladesh. SBN Kenya is working closely with SUN focal point, Ministry of Health, Agriculture, Industry, Trade and Cooperatives. In Nigeria, SBN facilitated the involvement of Private Sector in the development of the Action Plan and M&amp;E framework for the National Food and Nutrition Policy.</li> </ul>
	<b>Increased private sector awareness of the role they can play &amp; their responsibilities in addressing malnutrition.</b>	Number of business members of national SBN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the recent SUN Global Gathering in Nepal SBN announced membership had now exceeded 650 members (we do however discuss below the extent to which this figure should be approached with caution).</li> </ul>
		Number of individual businesses convened at SBN meetings/ events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number attending such meetings is not always known across the different networks, but as we note below, where there is evidence. at least 50% of members (albeit not necessarily individual businesses) attend meetings.</li> </ul>
		% of membership base attending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On average at least 50% of members attend each meeting (albeit Zambia reports a higher average of 60%, and Kenya reports an average of 65% of</li> </ul>

Logic Model	Action	Indicator	Assessment
			members attending their meetings).
	<b>Dissemination to businesses of responsible business practices</b>	Number of tools/guidance documents/best practices disseminated to businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National SBNs are using a selection of tools (see Annex 7 in the main report for a full list of the tools).</li> <li>In some instances, tools were not known and hence not used (see discussion below with regards to use of these tools).</li> </ul>
	<b>Business associations become advocates and conduits for SBN</b>	Number of strategic partnerships between national SBN with business associations and other partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst the number is typically small per country (e.g. Mozambique report two such partnerships), as we discuss below the significance of these partnerships has been critical to building a successful network. Examples include respective platforms partnering with the Confederation of Economic Associations (CTA) in Mozambique, the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and with the with the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT.)</li> <li>SBN Kenya has partnerships with Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), Kenya Association of Manufactures (KAM) and Kenya National Chambers of Commerce and Industries (KNCCI).</li> </ul>
	<b>Partners identified and linkages created, providing access to finance, technical assistance &amp; business development support</b>	Number of business support services or providers identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples are few, but in countries such as Mozambique and Zambia several BDS providers have been identified. In Zambia this includes Musika and Technoserve. In the case of Mozambique SBN is working through CTA to identify prospective BDS providers. In the case of Nigeria the network has hired a TA specialist who has been assisting with this process.</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<b>Businesses make commitments to address nutrition</b>	Number of businesses making commitments to address nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As noted in Table 1 above six countries reported on the commitments made by members, but as we discuss in the main report these commitments have not yet been verified.</li> </ul>

Logic Model	Action	Indicator	Assessment
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Studies found that networks have struggled to verify members to date as they have no process to do the verification (i.e. how will these commitments be assessed, and who will do the assessment?), they do not want to alienate members by enforcing commitments, and in many instances members have neither the resources nor appropriate action plans to mobilize around nutrition initiatives.</li> </ul>
	<b>SBN members form partnerships and capacity is built</b>	Number of links/partnerships formed between SBN members and relevant partners (to provide support to address business needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As noted, at the global level this is at a very early stage, but a number of partnerships have just begun, these include                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 Technical Assistance offers made to 12 National SBNs.</li> <li>The work being done by companies such as BASF, DSM and AFI to support members of SBNs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>Increased production of nutritious foods</b>	Number of business members that developed a new nutritious product (as a result of SBN advocacy/support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still in its infancy, but see below the discussion of the trans-fat pilot projects being conducted in both Pakistan and Nigeria.</li> </ul>
	<b>Businesses adopt responsible practices around nutrition (core business &amp; CSR)</b>	Number of business members that improved existing product through fortification/ reformulation or resized (as a result of SBN advocacy/ support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above, see below the discussion of the trans-fat pilot projects being conducted in both Pakistan and Nigeria.</li> <li>There is also work that has begun on this in Zambia (e.g. work being done by Java Foods), Tanzania and Indonesia.</li> </ul>
		Number of business members that implement workplace nutrition programmes (as a result of SBN advocacy/support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst no quantitative data exists against this indicator, our qualitative work found, for instance (and discussed with regards to commitments below) that work is being done in this area in Indonesia (see Case Study for more details).</li> </ul>
		Number and type of business members implementing a responsible marketing policy (as a result of SBN advocacy/ support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No information to date.</li> </ul>

Logic Model	Action	Indicator	Assessment
		Number of businesses having made verified improvements to their policies and practices to improve access and demand to NSF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No information to date.</li> </ul>
		Number of businesses that are meeting their targets towards their nutrition commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No information to date.</li> </ul>

18. **What factors explain the performance of SBN to date, at global and national levels?** Factors that enhance success include being under the broader SUN movement (at both global and national level), the effectiveness and quality of the global team in providing tailored support to the country networks, the governance of SBN (at the global level through the advisory group and the operations committee, and through advisory boards established at national level), the presence of a full-time coordinator at national level, leveraging off GAIN and WFP presence in country, and predictable funding (especially at National level).

**Table 4 Summary of enabling factors**

Factor	Comment
Being part of the SUN Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convening powers important, but varies widely and dependent on the effectiveness of the focal point.</li> <li>In-country SBN has benefited from relationships with other SUN networks.</li> </ul>
Global Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong team, well linked to countries.</li> <li>Nascent networks have benefitted from direct involvement of SBN global team.</li> </ul>
Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of a full-time coordinator.</li> </ul>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is benefit to be had in an advisory group, with strong private sector involvement, but only if the advisory group is used effectively (e.g. asked to provide advice on strategic matters).</li> </ul>
Hosting arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Globally, GAIN and WFP were seen to be effective co-hosts for SBN.</li> <li>Nationally, a case can be made for GAIN and WFP to provide catalytic support for the set-up of SBN (though as Indonesia demonstrates, their role is not essential). It is harder to make the case for GAIN and WFP to act as hosts for SBN on an ongoing basis since it limits the degree of private sector ownership.</li> </ul>
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A strong M&amp;E system ensures evidence-based decision making (including effective course correction), but only if</li> </ul>

	the system collects valid data routinely and it is actually seen to be useful in helping to improve performance <sup>5</sup> .
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding predictability is critical in ensuring lasting impact.</li> </ul>

19. Factors that have undermined progress across the causal pathways include the absence of factors listed above (e.g. weak SUN Movement focal point in-country, or the absence of an advisory board in country), erratic funding at national level, and significant staff turnover within host institutions (notably WFP in Zambia).

## Conclusion

20. As a result of the evaluation, we conclude that SBN’s purpose largely makes sense, but that its purpose is not always clearly spelt out at the national level. Moreover, despite a number of challenges at both the global and the national level SBN has achieved notable successes in delivering against expected outputs. Where there has been more progress, there have been strong two-way linkages between global and national levels, as expressed for example through the pitch competitions and through the relatively strong performance along causal pathways in Mozambique.

21. However, further along the causal pathways progress has been uneven, especially at the national level. Several challenges continue to face SBN such as ineffective coordination with other SUN movement networks in-country, not systematically tracking and reporting progress in country, and ongoing debates about the level of ownership of country networks by the private sector. In addition, funding predictability remains a major challenge for many of the networks at country level.

22. The SUN Movement as a whole, within which SBN is nested, is currently reflecting on what it can do to make a meaningful contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the six interim World Health Assembly approved 2025 interim SDG targets. Moreover, SBN itself is giving consideration to its next iteration (SBN 3.0, for the period 2021 – 2025). The next period for all the networks is critical. In thinking about SBN’s role in this critical reflection process under way in the SUN Movement, thought will need to be given to how SBN can continue to improve performance at the national level. Whilst not a recommendation per se SBN could consider developing a five-year strategy with a focus on making national SBNs more effective, on the back of which and to facilitate this process a more ambitious resource mobilization strategy may help to ensure national networks are not operating on a restricted budget and have reasonable tenure.

23. The evaluation did identify issues worthy of further attention which should be considered as part of the current critical reflection process SBN will be engaged in. These issues are linked to a set of recommendations:

- Revisit SBN’s strategic purpose:

<sup>5</sup> In our detailed assessment of eight functional areas of the SBN M&E system (Annex 5) we noted that that whilst the system has been structured in a logical manner, the current system is not being used optimally. There appears to be little training provided to coordinators on the use of the national databases, there does not appear to be any attempt to verify whether information submitted by coordinators is accurate, and ultimately much of the good work being done at country level is not being routinely captured and reported upon.

- a. Resolve or balance the tension between 'offering a neutral platform' that is sometimes 'led by the private sector', further unpack the complex mix of political and technical functions that this implies, and be clearer about how to balance these functions at global versus national level.
  - b. Explore whether greater impact (and political acceptability) might flow from more effectively recognizing and embracing the needs of SMEs rather than large companies at the national level.
  - c. Work more collaboratively and coherently with existing partners at national level (such as those within the SUN Movement and the nutrition sector more broadly) who might be better placed to undertake certain functions (e.g. enabling environment issues) and focus more on the work only SBN can do.
- Document the intention behind both logic models, and have some have some clear guidance associated with how, where and when they are best used, for what purpose, and the extent to which they can be adapted. In addition, address the gaps in the logic models, such as:
    - a. Defining 'partnerships' and 'enabling environment' elements more clearly, and possibly more narrowly.
    - b. Emphasising the pitch competition and the work around building investment pipelines.
  - National SBNs should consider establishing an advisory group, with strong private sector involvement, but only if the advisory group is empowered to challenge and provide strategic guidance and to engage with broader SUN network and government policy makers.
  - Despite significant, growing demands on the global SBN team, we encourage regular check-ins with SBN coordinators individually and to ensure that all work is as focused as possible. Possibly an informal indicator and simple checklist could be developed to enable the team to quickly turn down global-level opportunities that are not likely to add value to nutrition-focused SMEs in-country, and to focus efforts most strongly in the most promising areas.
  - Clearer articulation of goals and targets at country level is needed, and preferably as part of a clear and concise country strategy. Ensure an (annual) action plan is developed to effectively implement the strategy and drive impact forward.
  - It could be helpful for the global team to diagnose where, when, how and why tools and guidance are or are not being used; and to ensure there is awareness at the national level of what exists and how the global team might benefit the networks by showcasing at events, regional calls, and via on-line updates.
  - Before establishing new SBNs, ensure that the SUN focal point is supportive and aware of the strengths and benefits of the business network, and co-develop an awareness and integration plan for coordination among all existing networks. If the SUN focal point is weak, then SBN, including the Global SBN team, should

make more effort to emphasize collaboration from the outset and potentially to get clearance for direct, cross-network coordination.