Position profiles for the NPIN GSF team leader and technical experts

Agrinatura is offering 3 positions (one team leader and two technical experts) to run the Global Support Facility (GSF) for the National Information Platforms for Nutrition (NIPN). These positions are open for four years, starting on the 1st of July 2015 and based in Montpellier, France at Agropolis International headquarters. Applications (CV + application letter) should be sent to gsf_nipn@agropolis.fr by the 27th of April.

Background

The European Commission (EC) is launching an ambitious programme to fight against undernutrition and malnutrition in developing countries affected by this burden. The objective of this programme is to contribute to the global reduction of stunting in alignment with the World Health Assembly 2025 targets and in support of the EU Nutrition Action Plan commitments. Through this programme, the EC will support the establishment of National Information Platforms for Nutrition (NIPNs) in ten or so developing countries in Africa and Asia, having expressed interest in embarking in such a programme. The NIPN initiative is conceived as an approach to assist countries to strengthen their capacity to make use of existing national nutrition information to its full potential, geared to each individual country’s needs and capacities. This therefore requires not only a strong cooperation with governments.

The NIPN approach is fundamentally about strengthening countries’ capacities to manage, analyse, interpret and use information for the decisions the countries need to make (informed policies, programmes and resource allocations) towards effective nutrition actions. This information concerns the monitoring of changes in undernutrition indicators as well as information concerning nutrition-relevant country investments/projects and the association between the two. The NIPN approach is conceptually close to a surveillance system and is based on a continuous observational design, with the district as the unit of analysis. This then allows a more detailed picture to be compiled of the overall nutrition situation in a country, whilst also permitting comparisons between districts. Such comparisons will allow assessment of the effectiveness of programmes or interventions implemented within countries.

A country’s objectives in establishing an NIPN will vary, and might include: early warning; policy planning; program(s) monitoring; program(s) evaluation; advocacy; inclusion of nutrition within the responsibilities of a number of sectors; mobilization of communities (and/or politicians); research etc. The NIPN will be a country driven process to ensure ownership and sustainability and will:

- Maximise the analysis and interpretation of existing national and sub-national nutrition relevant data;
- Identify and promote the filling of critical nutrition information gaps;
- Monitor national and sub-national progress in reducing undernutrition;
- Determine association between changes in undernutrition and financial investments in nutrition (from both domestic and international);
- Build plausibility arguments on the (cost) effectiveness of different interventions, programmes and approaches in reducing undernutrition;
- Strengthen national and international accountability of government and donor stakeholders (primarily) in meeting commitments made.
The heart of the NIPN is a live database, which, once set up, is continuously updated and analysed, in order to feed back into country programmes and priorities. Such a database would be established in each country. The NIPN database would be fed with data mainly from 4 types of sources (existing information systems, periodic surveys, intervention-monitoring systems, and resource-tracking systems). Depending on the country, additional elements may need to be introduced (i.e. new data collection systems) to fill critical gaps (most likely around assessing implementation strength of nutrition-relevant programmes). Analyses on the database would produce various types of reports (on the implementation process, on results, on specific studies where these are available, etc.). These reports would then be used to inform policy makers on a regular basis, to give feedback to donors and other stakeholders involved in nutrition programmes and nutrition data collection.

The process for establishing a NIPN at the country level can be divided in the following steps:

1. Securing the buy-in of all stakeholders relevant to the NIPN (e.g. those who collect/control data, those who make policy/program decisions, those who fund these activities); and defining with countries the main objectives they want to achieve;

2. Identifying the availability of existing in-country data sources as well as data gaps that might be filled (either by enhancing existing data streams or by developing new data collection streams that are feasible to sustain over time);

3. Applying data quality assessment procedures that will improve/maintain the quality of routine/existing information sources. These quality assessment procedures will also be applied in any new data streams that are needed);

4. Organising/assembling those data into a database that allows contextualized cross-sector analysis by district;

5. Building local monitoring and evaluation capacity among stakeholders/sectors to analyse, interpret, apply (and feedback to the source/districts) NIPN data for assessment, planning and decision making purposes (as well as capacity for continuing to maintain and grow the NIPN).

Realistically, most countries interested in NIPN will require some level of support to enable the system to function reliably – capacity building, reinforcement of information systems, designing interventions specifically to reduce undernutrition, setting up monitoring systems for those interventions, etc. Alongside these country-level steps, support will be needed to ensure coordination and orchestration of the work across countries. Therefore some mechanism is needed to organize international support to countries, whilst relying as much as possible on national and regional technical bodies: the Global Support Facility (GSF) will thus be the technical assistance component to support, at country level, the design, establishment and coordination of the NIPNs. The GSF Core Team will be based in Montpellier and will be composed of 4 people: one team leader and two technical experts, assisted by one bilingual (English/French) secretary / administrative manager. The GSF Core Team will also benefit from logistics, administrative and financial support facilities of the organization hosting the project, Agropolis International in Montpellier. Whenever necessary, the GSF Core Team will also rely on a pool of short-term experts from the Agrinatura network to be mobilized according to the identified needs in specific countries.
Global missions of the GSF Core Team

- Support the design and implementation of NIPN in selected countries.
- Provide technical assistance to EU delegations and partner institutions relevant for establishing NIPNs.
- Ensure effective coordination, information-sharing, communication and advocacy of the global NIPN approach, ensuring coherence with related initiatives (SUN, GNR, etc.).

The GSF will be accountable for performance to the Stakeholder Group which the EC will establish, comprising representatives from funding agencies, international organisations involved in nutrition issues, partner countries and civil society organisations. The GSF will also be advised by an Expert Group which will provide advisory support and oversight as well as quality assurance guidance, and comprise representatives of related initiatives and programmes. The GSF Core Team will work under the responsibility of Chair of Agropolis International, who will act as project director.

Required skills and abilities

GSF Core Team staff will demonstrate skills and experience relevant, but not limited, to nutrition data collection, management, analysis, presentation and utilisation, as well as understanding of the current status of nutrition relevant data needs and gaps at global and country level. Knowledge of other nutrition-sensitive sectors would be an asset.

**Team Leader** (one full time position)

The Team Leader’s role will be to manage and coordinate the team to ensure provision of technical assistance to the country platforms, technical guidance to partners in-country, liaison with international partners, liaison with the Expert Group and accountability to the Stakeholder Group.

**Qualifications and skills**

- A PhD level in a discipline related to Food science, Nutrition, or Health.
- At least 10 years professional experience in areas directly relevant to nutrition, development, monitoring and evaluation systems, with at least 5 years’ experience in developing countries.
- Demonstrable expertise in leading technical teams and programmes, and ensuring coherence with international partners and initiatives.
- Have demonstrated excellent communications and negotiating skills, particularly in relation to international institutions and partner government.
- Be familiar with the latest developments in the field of nutrition, including national and international policies and latest international developments, institutional arrangements, initiatives and strategies in the field of nutrition (including governance issues) in particular in relation to Data for Nutrition.
- Have at least 2 years of experience and knowledge related to EU development policy and have a good knowledge of EU development cooperation programmes and procedures.
- Have a strong network and contacts in the development and nutrition fields, ideally with a focus on information and data, to be able to build alliances and collaboration with related initiatives and institutions.
- Have at least 3 years of experience in high level coordination related to the above professional skills.
- Must have excellent drafting and oral presentation skills in English and be functionally competent (or prepared to become so) in French also.
The Team Leader's responsibility will be to ensure the overall delivery of the project, and for the quality control of the project outputs. S/he will also be in charge of ensuring the quality of the outputs of the short-term experts.

S/he will also take the lead role in the initiation, organisation, implementation and follow-up of the activities of the NIPN GSF. S/he will have a specific role in capacity development and support to country institutions. S/he should thus be ready to travel extensively to the target countries and to Brussels and Geneva.

S/he will maintain close and regular contact with the EC IDC Unit C1 and the concerned EU Delegations, the members of the Expert Group and Stakeholder Group, and other relevant stakeholders.

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Technical Experts Platform Nutrition Data and Monitoring (two full time positions):
technical assistance and mission support to country NIPN – 1 Anglophone, 1 Francophone

They will have overall responsibility for delivering specific technical assistance packages and they will be responsible to the Team Leader. They will closely supervise and guide the work of the contracted Short Term Experts.

**Qualifications and skills**

- At least Master level degrees in disciplines related to food and nutrition or data for monitoring & information.
- Have at least 5 years successful experience in data collection and/or management information systems.
- Have at least 5 years successful experience in capacity development, including providing practical training and support, development of training matter and training delivery and/or project management.
- Be familiar with the latest developments in the field of nutrition, including national and international policies and latest international developments, institutional arrangements, initiatives and strategies in the field of nutrition (including governance issues) in particular in relation to Data for Nutrition.
- Have a good knowledge of EC development cooperation programmes, especially in the field of nutrition (more than 2 years of experience ideally).
- Have excellent drafting and oral presentation skills in either English or French, with competence in the other. Other language skills (Portuguese, Spanish) could be a plus.

They will act as advisers to the Team Leader and to the country teams on all aspects related to surveillance and monitoring technologies and methodologies. They will provide expert assistance in all activities (including the drafting of guidelines and capacity building material) and short term assignments related to the collection, organisation and coherence in the treatment of information and indicators. They are likely to be assigned specific attributions according to their personal fields of specialisation and linguistic capacity. They should thus be ready to travel extensively to the target countries and to Brussels and Geneva.