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Multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) and policy connections in the food system in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Vietnam: Mapping of MSPs and policies to promote a shift towards a food system framing for healthier diets

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Background:

- The project sought to explore the role of existing multi-stakeholder platforms as mechanisms in scaling and anchoring food systems transformation for healthier diets in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Vietnam.

Objectives

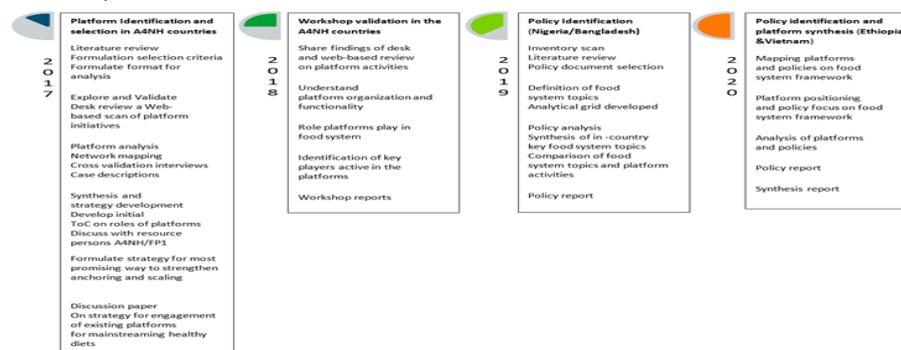
This project sought to:

- Conceptualize existing MSPs and understand where MSPs are active in food system.
- Understand where national policies are focused in the food system and how the MSPs link to these policies.
- Consider the potential role existing MSPs might play in anchoring & scaling healthier diets in the A4NH focal countries.

Materials / methods

- Conducted a literature review to conceptualize MSPs.
- Developed an analytical framework & conducted network mapping to identify MSPs working on food system issues in the focal countries.
- Mapped MSPs & policies in the food system to understand where they are active.
- Identified opportunities and limitations regarding the role of MSPs in anchoring & scaling healthier diets.

Figure 1: modified Stepwise approach diagram, source: A4NH flagship1 study



Results

- There are many existing MSPs linked to various food systems activities all A4NH countries, and all the countries have an extensive range of policies which cover most aspects of the food system.
- The food systems policies more holistically cover the food system themes than MSPs.

Figure 2: Food system based MSP mapping in Bangladesh source: adapted food system framework (HLPE,2017)

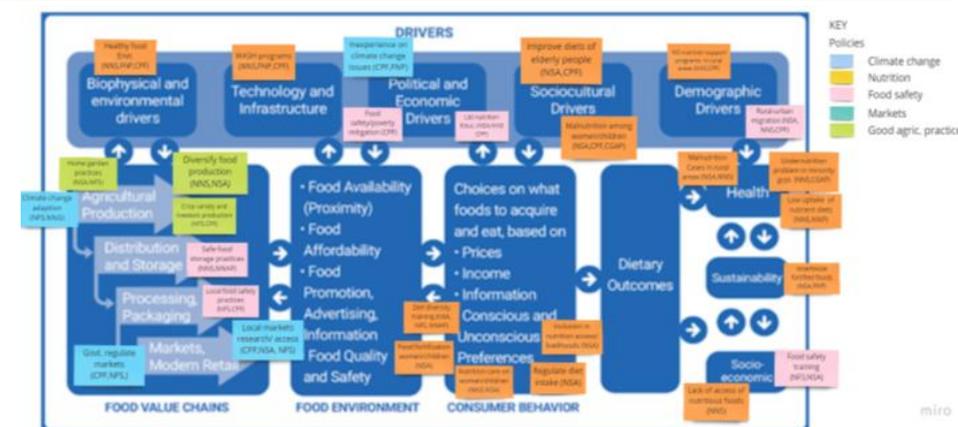
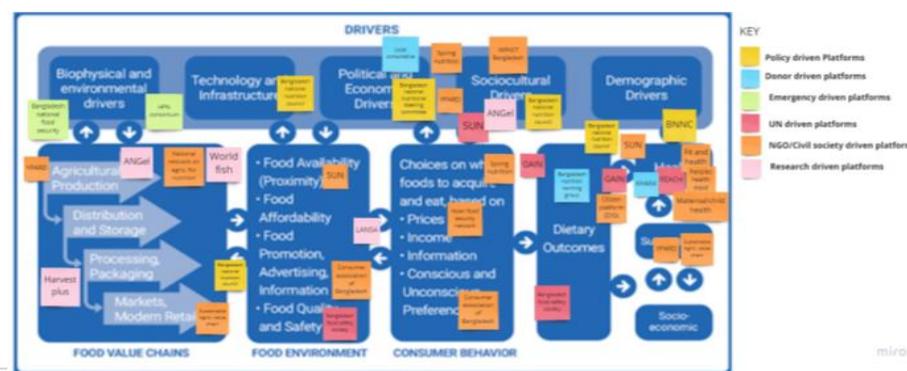


Figure 3: Food system based policy mapping in Vietnam

- MSP tend to focus on specific issues such as child undernutrition or food safety, leading them to focus their activities on specific areas of the food system.
- Healthier diets, per se, are not a priority outcome for either policies or MSPs. The focus remains on a narrower definition of malnutrition, usually undernutrition in vulnerable groups but increasingly also overnutrition and obesity.
- Few policies or MSPs focus on other food systems outcomes like sustainability

Conclusion

- Given that none of the MSPs currently focus on healthier diets, there may be a limited role that existing MSPs can play in transitioning to food systems framing.
- MSPs could support a shift to a more system-based framing of the food system, that goes beyond nutrition, food availability, and strengthening agricultural systems, to align with the more comprehensive approach which aims at achieving healthier diets, but they are not yet doing so.