

## I. Sample submission under the proposed template for the policy basket of the Global Alliance

General description of the policy instrument/intervention	
1.1. Policy Instrument (short, descriptive name for the policy)	School Meals Programme (SMP)
1.2. Target population	School-aged children, particularly those from vulnerable low-income families.
1.3. Description (please describe the main features of the intervention):	<p>School meal programmes (SMPs) provide healthy, nutritious food to children, utilizing schools as a delivery platform. The description below applies to government-led SMPs or in contexts where there is a transition towards government-led programmes.</p> <p>School meal programmes vary from country-to-country in their design, funding source, financing options and implementation, including on: objectives, policy, legislative and regulatory framework, institutional arrangements, modality, coverage, targeting, school meal day provision in a school year, food types and menus with or without nutrition standards, procurement models and the level of centralization, food service mechanisms, implementation modalities, and integration of complementary interventions. School meals provide a lever to introduce change in local and national food systems towards sustainable production and consumption. Through home-grown school feeding programs local production and delivery chains can be established and strengthened and can be catalyst for the transformation of food systems.</p> <p>With almost 100 member states, the School Meals Coalition reflects the diverse array of programme design and implementation of SMPs, reflecting the distinct contexts and objectives of member states.</p> <p>SMPs typically manifest in three modalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In school meals: A breakfast or lunch is provided within school premises.</li> <li>• In-school snack: A snack provided to children (e.g., milk, high-energy biscuits or fruits);</li> <li>• Take-home rations: School-going children’s families are provided with food that is usually contingent upon children attending a certain amount of schooling.</li> </ul>

In certain contexts, programmes can be designed to achieve multiple outcomes, including poverty reduction, alleviating child hunger, enhancing access to quality education, and fostering improved learning outcomes. In addition, these programmes can effectively address specific vulnerabilities such as promoting girls' education through interventions like take-home rations.

The coverage of this policy instrument can vary in terms of the types of schools, with certain country contexts covering one or more types of schools (pre-primary, primary and secondary).

In addition, there are several targeting approaches that the policy instrument could employ, spanning from individual targeting, wherein beneficiaries are selected based on demographic criteria such as age, gender or income-level, to geographical and universal targeting.

The level of centralization of these programmes varies. Governments have options for how they provide food supplies to schools. They can either opt for a centralized model, where in-kind commodities are directly provided to schools, or they can choose a decentralized approach, wherein food vouchers or cash transfers enable subnational actors or schools themselves to procure commodities. In some contexts, governments may also employ a hybrid approach that combines the centralized procurement model (e.g., for dry goods) with a decentralized procurement model (e.g., for perishable goods).

In addition to considering the level of centralization, the design of these programmes also takes into account the location wherein these meals are prepared – whether it occurs on school premises (on-site) or off school premises (off-site). Central kitchen models prepare meals off-site, depend largely on number of children and meals served, complexity of menu items, and kitchen facilities/infrastructure, and transportation (distribution of meals to individual schools)

These programmes also provide a unique platform that can embed other quality enhancing actions (e.g., food fortification, clean cooking) and health interventions (e.g., handwashing with soap, height measurement, weight measurement, deworming treatment, immunizations, eye testing and eyeglasses, hearing testing and treatment, dental cleaning and testing, menstrual hygiene, drinking water and water purification) and improved sanitation facilities and awareness.

There exists a heterogeneity with respect to the financing options that governments employ to support these programmes. This policy instrument is primarily financed through non-contributory means, drawn from general government revenue. Domestic financing constitutes the vast majority of the share of financing (approximately 98 percent) for school meals (WFP, 2022). Non-contributory financing for this policy instrument typically includes tax financing, either direct, indirect, or a combination thereof.

	<p>Additionally, donor funding (in the form of grants or loans) provides non- government sources of non-contributory financing, which in low-income countries makes up 55 percent of the share of funding for SMPs (WFP, 2022).</p> <p>It is important to note that countries face distinct, context-specific challenges in implementing school meal programs. However, some countries may share certain challenges such as conflict and instability, climate, and financing. Successful implementation of school meal programs depends on several prior conditions. These include: strong pre-existing political commitment, a robust policy and regulatory framework, sustainable financing, clearly defined program objectives and targeting approaches, adequate enabling infrastructure, and a sufficient number of competent food service providers, among others (see Section 1.7). Recognizing these prior conditions is crucial, especially when working in fragile and low-resource contexts, where they can lay the foundation for effective implementation.</p>
<p>1.4. Keywords (<i>how it relates to broader categories of policy interventions, instruments, and target populations, i.e., social protection, smallholder agriculture, resilience building, child support, migration, others. Multiple categories may apply</i>)</p>	<p>i) school meals; (ii) school feeding; (iii) school health and nutrition; (iv) homegrown school feeding; (v) school-aged children; (vi) family farming; (vii) local and regional procurement; (viii) quality education; (ix) social protection; (x) food and nutrition security; (xi) social assistance; (xii) in-kind transfer; (xiii) cash transfer; (xiv) individual, geographic and universal targeting; (xv) girls' education; (xvi) deworming; (xvii) social inclusion; (xviii) food systems; (xix) child hunger and malnutrition; (xx) learning; (xxi) school attendance, enrollment and retention; (xxii) school drop out; (xxiii) school food environment; (xxv) healthy diets; (xxvi) school gardens; (xxvi) gender equality; (xxvii) food systems transformation; (xxviii) water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in schools;</p>
<p>1.5 General and specific objectives (<i>links with specific SDGs</i>)</p>	<p>General objectives: a) increase access to healthy, nutritious, and safe meals to children in targeted schools, tackling child hunger as well as all forms of malnutrition and enhancing health, food and nutrition outcomes (SDG 2 and 3); and b) improve access to quality education and enhance learning outcomes, bolstering human capital development (SDG 4 and 5); c) increase local agricultural productivity and smallholder farmer food production for the preparation of school meals, thereby improving smallholder farmer livelihoods and strengthening local food systems (SDG 1, 2, 8 and 10);</p> <p>Specific objectives: a) improve school enrollment, attendance and retention and learning outcomes by tackling barriers to quality education and learning (SDG 4); b) stimulate local economies and job creation (SDG 1 and 8); c) advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment through the greater participation of women in school meal value chains (SDG 1,5 and 10); d) reducing social inequalities by providing meals to children, particularly girls and the most vulnerable and marginalized children (SDG 10);</p>

	<p>e) promote teacher, student and community learning on healthy and sustainable diets and lifestyles and ecological literacy (SDG 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15); f) promote clean cooking and storage infrastructure in targeted schools to reduce the negative socio- economic impacts of traditional cooking on women’s and girls’ health, time and working conditions as well as the environmental impacts on climate, deforestation and land degradation (SDG 3, 5, 7, 13); (g) contribute to peace and social cohesions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (SDG 16); (h) promote food systems transformation and the transition towards planet-friendly agri-food systems by sourcing sustainably produced foods locally, particularly from farms that employ climate-resilient, agroecological, regenerative or other innovative approaches (SDG 2, 11, 13 and 15); (i) promote multistakeholder and cross- sectoral collaboration towards the simultaneous achievement of multiple SDGs (SDG 17).</p>
<p>1.6 Linkages with UN recommendations. <i>(including non-binding ones)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Art. 25;</li> <li>• International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) – Art. 11, 12, 13;</li> <li>• International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – Art. 24 (1);</li> <li>• Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC),– Art. 3 [3], 6, 18[3], 23, 24 [2c], 26, 27[1-3], 28; General Comment 15 on Art. 24 paragraph 2 (c)'</li> <li>• Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>• Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) – Art. 10 (f)'</li> <li>• Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People – Art. 14[2-3], 17[2], 21[2]</li> <li>• Sustainable Development Goals;</li> <li>• Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development (Section V.1 System-wide requirements paragraph 10e, 41c).</li> <li>• World Health Assembly Recommendations on the Marketing of Food and Non-alcoholic Beverages to Children (Resolution WHA63.14);</li> <li>• Codex Alimentarius General Principles of Food Hygiene;</li> <li>• UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement (Art. 11, Section 3b]</li> </ul>

<p>1.7 Limits, risks, and contingency measures (including guidance on prior conditions required on a country for success in implementation, limitations, needs for complementary interventions, potential risks, and others)</p>	<p>Prior conditions for successful implementation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong pre-existing political commitment for school meals, particularly at the highest levels.</li> <li>• Existence of a policy, legal, regulatory framework governing the implementation of the national programme, including an established institutional arrangement for programme delivery and nutritional guidelines and standards for school meals;</li> <li>• Assured availability of sustainable funding and a financial commitment to sustain operations of the policy instrument into the long-term;</li> <li>• Clearly defined programme objectives and targeting approach for selecting beneficiaries (individual, geographic or universal)</li> <li>• Availability of adequate enabling infrastructure and facilities, including school kitchens, food preparation (e.g., planet-friendly cooking appliances) and food storage facilities, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure, transport and energy;</li> <li>• Adequate number of food service providers (cooks, catering firms) and investments in strengthening their competencies and capacities. This will ensure adherence to nutritional and food safety standards. Additionally, it will allow teachers to focus on teaching, limiting disruptions to the learning environment;</li> <li>• Sound funding for social behaviour change communication;</li> <li>• Establishment of a robust country-wide monitoring and evaluation framework for school meals for evidence-generation, oversight and accountability;</li> <li>• Established mechanisms for community participation;</li> <li>• Established multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary coordination mechanisms that involve education, health, agriculture and social protection sectors and engage other sectors as the need arises;</li> <li>• Designed to be shock-responsive to respond to unforeseen food, climate, socio-political and health shocks (e.g., pandemics, natural disasters, food crises and conflict);</li> </ul>
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	<p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constrained fiscal space preventing scale-up of school meal programmes;</li> <li>• For governments seeking to transition to or scale up home-grown school feeding programmes, structural barriers could limit smallholder farmer participation. These barriers could include poor yields and quality produce, poor rural infrastructure driving up logistic costs, long distances between schools and farms, etc.;</li> <li>• While school meal programmes generally promote social inclusion, there are rare instances where they can inadvertently lead to social exclusion (e.g., when children are unable to participate due to medical, cultural or religious reasons or due to [real or perceived] stigma);</li> </ul> <p>Needs for Complementary Interventions</p> <p>SMPs may integrate or synergize with complementary activities, depending on the country, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health-related interventions: handwashing with soap, height measurement, weight measurement, deworming treatment, eye testing and eyeglasses, hearing testing and treatment, dental cleaning and testing, menstrual hygiene, drinking water and water purification, immunization;</li> <li>• Education-related interventions that cover topics such as: food and nutrition education, health and life skills education, physical education, hygiene, sexual and reproductive health, and environmental and ecological literacy through school gardens;</li> <li>• School infrastructure-related interventions: construction of school kitchens and the purchase of cooking equipment. WASH facilities etc.;</li> <li>• Mobilization of sufficient and skilled human resources in capacity to support scaling-up school meal programmes;</li> <li>• Standards and regulatory measures should govern the promotion of unhealthy foods and beverages high in added sugars, salt, saturated fat and low in nutritive value in school cafeterias, food stores and vending machines. Marketing of such items within the school premises should be restricted to promote a healthy school food environment.</li> </ul>
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- Food systems-related interventions: interventions across the school meal value chain that support smallholder farmers with enhancing food production and post-harvest handling and other actors in the processing of food (e.g., food fortification);

#### Potential Risks

- Economic and/or climate shocks impacting food prices or availability, threatening the financial sustainability of programmes;
- Challenges in ensuring meal quality and safety.
- Politicization of school meal programmes, hindering design (e.g., targeting approach) and implementation (e.g., awarding of contracts to suppliers and food service providers);
- Without analyzing or taking into consideration parents', teachers' and children's points of view, particularly their perceptions of stigma, the participation of some families and children may be limited.