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Micronutrient and  
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# International Cooperation in the Philippines: Challenges and Prospects

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## Sector Development Approach for Health (SDAH)

- the Philippine Department of Health's Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP) articulated in 2007
- an approach where the DOH takes the lead in coordinating and managing donor support and aligning these with government priorities towards full implementation of a sector program
- aimed at improving the quality and efficiency of mobilizing and utilizing foreign investments, and harmonizing the same with national and local investments to ensure sustainability of reforms
- stakeholders and partners are encouraged to use common approaches, such as a common expenditure framework, monitoring and evaluation framework, harmonized technical assistance (TA) processes, and coordination of available resources

## **What does cooperation mean to the level of effort for nutrition?**

- **Able to work with less effort but reach wider scale on social mobilization**
- **Allow for nutrition to be surfaced in the MCH agenda**
- **Allow for better understanding of the nutrition-health continuum**
- **Enable the nutrition services/messages to be integrated with health services/messages**
- **Allow for mobilizing more and leveraging resources for nutrition**

# Challenges in Cooperation

- **SDAH agreements and convergence at the national level should be mirrored at the local level**
  - **Development partners/NGOs should be committed to go through the bureaucracy system and understand the country's situation and policies**
  - **Bureaucracy should be able to streamline processes**
  - **Local government units (LGUs) are devolved; LGUs differ from one another in terms of capabilities, resources, etc.**
    - **Consider political interplay and cultural sensitivities**
    - **Rethink assistance and mechanisms for delivery to areas with weak governance but really needs assistance; so there will be no creation of a parallel system**
- **Project-based interventions have different timetable with institution-based changes. Projects:**
  - **life/funding is short term but problems/needs are chronic**
  - **tend to go for outputs without changing capabilities of the actors**
  - **more concerned with deliverables than the process of attaining the deliverables and local ownership**

# Challenges in Cooperation

- **Most projects do not have funds for collection of baseline data, and LGUs do not have data for nutrition indicators, except for weight**
  - **Difficulty in advocacy**
  - **No or weak evaluation**
- **Projects need to identify their niches and harmonize their assessment, planning, monitoring and reporting and tools, including population statistics used, definition of terms, etc.**
- **Need for a pro-active stance in seeking out other stakeholders, particularly those from the private sector, academe and community-based organizations**

# Prospects in Cooperation

- **The recent years are characterized with**
  - **less donor driven and less fragmented activities**
  - **more discussions among development partners, by themselves, and with DOH/CHDs, and more unified action**
  - **Even with decentralization, the national government is able to leverage resources of LGUs to address local priorities**
- **Development partners and NGOs start to have a common**
  - **goal and direction**
  - **focus**
- **With current initiatives, international cooperation will very likely raise the level of progress of nutritional outcomes in the country**