

Coordination, Goals & Overall Monitoring Gear

Key questions: Is there a government system in place that is responsible for coordinating the breastfeeding program at the national/state level? Is this system operational, decentralized and allow for effective decision making from the national to the local level?

Background

Scaling-up of breastfeeding programs and initiatives cannot be effective without having a strong, evidence-informed and decentralized coordinating system (i.e., coordinates effectively activities from the local to the national level). The Breastfeeding Gear Model (BFGM) posits that this coordinating system serves as the master gear, which sets and monitors overall goals and ensures all gears receive timely feedback, thereby enabling the breastfeeding program machine to function properly. Thus, goal setting and feedback are the key tools of the coordination gear.

Themes and Benchmarks

It is expected that a “National Breastfeeding Committee” or equivalent entity will be responsible for overall coordination and monitoring. This is the only theme within this gear. There are three benchmarks that evaluate the existence and role of the National Breastfeeding Committee or equivalent entity.

All benchmarks are referenced to “the past year” unless otherwise noted.

Breastfeeding Committee

Benchmark CGMG1: *There is a National Breastfeeding Committee/ IYCF Committee.*

Description: Not all countries have a National Breastfeeding Committee, but they may have an Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Committee that oversees breastfeeding. It is crucial that this committee strives for overall coordination of the scaling up and sustainability of the national breastfeeding program. This benchmark assesses whether there is a National Breastfeeding Committee or an IYCF Committee that is committed to protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding.

Possible Data Sources: Interviews with government officials from the MOH, or high level staff from UNICEF and WHO should reveal the presence of a National Breastfeeding

Committee/IYCF Committee. Interviews with committee members, as well as reviewing meeting minutes and resulting reports, should provide the details needed for the scoring criteria.

How to score: The scoring for this benchmark includes the presence of a National Breastfeeding Committee/IYCF Committee and the following criteria:

- a) meets regularly;
 - b) includes strong representation from civil organizations;
 - c) includes representation of sectors beyond health and nutrition;
 - d) set specific time bound breastfeeding objectives.
- No progress** has been made if there is no National Breastfeeding Committee/ IYCF Committee.
 - Minimal progress** has been made if there is a National Breastfeeding Committee/ IYCF Committee but it does not meet any or only one of the following criteria: a) meets regularly; b) includes strong representation from civil organizations; c) includes representation of sectors beyond health and nutrition; d) set specific time bound breastfeeding objectives.
 - Partial progress** has been made if there is a National Breastfeeding Committee/ IYCF Committee and it meets two to three of the following criteria: a) meets regularly; b) includes strong representation from civil society organizations; c) includes representation of sectors beyond health and nutrition; d) set specific time bound breastfeeding objectives.
 - Major progress** has been made if there is a National Breastfeeding Committee/ IYCF Committee and it meets all of the following criteria: a) meets regularly; b) includes strong representation from civil organizations; c) includes representation of sectors beyond health and nutrition; d) set specific time bound breastfeeding objectives.

Benchmark CGMG2: National Breastfeeding Committee/IYCF Committee work plan is reviewed and monitored regularly.

Description: If a National Breastfeeding Committee/IYCF Committee exists, then its activities must be overseen to ensure they are fulfilling their duties. Therefore, they must have a work plan in place, it must be reviewed regularly, and the progress of the work plan must be monitored regularly so that it is clear how well the work plan is being implemented.

Possible Data Sources: Interviews with committee members should identify the presence of a work plan, reviewing and monitoring responsibilities, and how often these occur. The work plan must be reviewed to corroborate the information provided by the key informants.

How to score: The scoring for this benchmark includes a specific time frame for reviewing and monitoring of the work plan. However, if a country does not have a National Breastfeeding Committee/IYCF Committee, this benchmark must be scored as *no progress*.

- No progress** has been made if there is no National Breastfeeding Committee/IYCF Committee work plan.
- Minimal progress** has been made if there is a National Breastfeeding Committee/IYCF Committee work plan but it is not reviewed at least once every two years nor monitored once every year.
- Partial progress** has been made if there is a National Breastfeeding Committee/IYCF Committee work plan and it is reviewed at least once every two years or monitored once every year.
- Major progress** has been made if there is a National Breastfeeding Committee/IYCF Committee work plan and it is reviewed at least once every two years and monitored once every year.

Benchmark CGMG3: Data related to breastfeeding program progress are used for decision-making and advocacy.

Description: Data that is gathered about the progress of breastfeeding programs by the National Breastfeeding/IYCF Committee should be used for decision-making and advocacy. This data provides decision makers and advocates with the evidence they need to push for change within breastfeeding legislation/policy, funding, training and program delivery, research and evaluation, and promotion to support scaling up of breastfeeding. This data is central to the ability of the coordinating gear to provide timely feedback to the rest of the gears and facilitates communications across them.

Possible Data Sources: Interviews with high level government officials within MOH, UNICEF and WHO should help identify if data about breastfeeding program progress are being used for decision-making and advocacy. Media reports may also be useful. If available, protocols which have the following data should be reviewed: a) how data about breastfeeding program progress is used for decision-making and advocacy and b) how data about breastfeeding programs is used to provide feedback to policy makers.

How to score: The scoring for this benchmark reflects the frequency at which data/information is used by National Breastfeeding/IYCF Committee for decision-making and advocacy.

- **No progress** has been made if data/information related to breastfeeding program progress are not being used for decision-making and advocacy.
- **Minimal progress** has been made if data/information related to breastfeeding program progress are used rarely (i.e. infrequently-) for decision-making and advocacy.
- **Partial progress** has been made if data/information related to breastfeeding program progress are used sometimes (i.e. somewhat frequently) for decision-making and advocacy.
- **Major progress** has been made if data/information related to breastfeeding program progress are used often (i.e. almost always/always) for decision-making and advocacy.