

Generic topic guide – VHW study – DRAFT

	SUSTAINABILITY DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	ACTIONS	CONTEXT
		In which ways has the innovation been sustained?	What actions are taken to achieve sustainability? Which actors are performing these actions? Have actions been effective?	Enabling contextual factors? Undermining contextual factors?
2	Overall sustainability			
3	Decision making to scale-up and sustain innovation			
4	Innovation design			
5	Financial & political			
6	Institutionalisation			
7	Organisation capacity			
8	Routinisation			
9	Social sustainability			
10	Aid effectiveness			

1. Overview of VHW implementation

DESCRIPTION

Has **implementation** of the village health worker scheme gone according to plan? (in terms of recruitment, training, deployment, supervision, tasks covered, incentive scheme, monitoring)

What has been particularly **effective**?

Have there been any **challenges**, and if so what?

ACTIONS

Did the scheme have to be **adapted or changed** in any way? If yes, how were any challenges overcome?

Who was involved in making those changes?

Were they only implemented in one or two wards, or across all 57?

How might those variations be accommodated when the scheme is scaled to the rest of the Gombe State?

2. Overall sustainability of the VHW scheme

DESCRIPTION

Is the VHW scheme sustainable? In what ways? How long is it expected to be sustained?

ACTIONS

What key **actions** have fostered innovation sustainability?

Which **actors** performed/performed those actions?

Have these actions been **effective**?

How was the **decision** made to sustain the innovation?

What were the key **factors** influencing the decision to sustain the innovation? [probe – was evidence of cost/cost effectiveness a part of the decision making?]

Who were the main **actors** influencing the decision?

CONTEXT

What are the main factors in the northeast Nigerian **context** enabling and undermining innovation sustainability?

Were **actions** taken to overcome any barriers?

3. Decision making

How was the decision made to adopt and sustain the innovation at scale?

Who were the main **actors** influencing the decision? [Probe – individuals and organisations]

What were the main **factors** influencing the decision? [probe – generation and presentation of evidence; government involvement in project; effective policy advocacy; support from champions and other organisations; scale-up was integrated within project design]

Did the **country context** influence the decision to adopt and sustain the innovation at scale? [probe – health and other development priorities; governance – how governments make policy decisions; influence of development agencies, civil society and other policy actors]

4. Innovation - design for sustainability

DESCRIPTION

Is the innovation designed to be sustainable? In what ways? [probe – use table?]

Relevant & important	Addresses important and/or visible health problems/needs
Effective & advantageous	Impacts positively on communities' health
	Has a comparative advantage over other innovations
Observable benefits	Benefits and health impacts are visible
	Benefits are easily demonstrated through evidence
Acceptable to health workers & communities	Culturally acceptable to sociocultural norms, religions, language, health beliefs and practices
	Appropriately branded using ideas and language meaningful to users
	Seen as being owned by communities
	Works with existing community structures and actors including village committees and traditional birth attendants
	Benefits and incentivises health workers
	Does not burden health workers by adding to their workload or making them more accountable for failure
Simple & low cost	Simple/convenient to use and easily understood by health workers and communities
	Low cost to implement at scale
	Low human resource inputs required
	Places no/minimal cost burden on user communities
Aligned & harmonised	Builds on and aligns with existing government health systems
	Addresses needs/fills gaps in government health programmes
	Coordinates with other donor programmes
Adaptable	Adaptable to different geographical, socioeconomic and cultural contexts
	Adaptable to different health systems contexts
Sustainable	Avoids/has low recurrent costs
	Includes local income generating schemes

ACTIONS

What **actions** were/are being taken to help ensure the innovation is designed to be sustainable?

Was evidence generated to support decision making? [probe – impacts evidence; operational evidence; cost evidence; other]

Which **actors** performed/perform those actions?

Have these actions been **effective**? How?

CONTEXT

Are there **contextual** factors making it more of less difficult to design the innovation for sustainability?

Were **actions** taken to overcome any barriers?

5. Financial and political sustainability

DESCRIPTION

What **financing model** has been/will be adopted to support the continuation of the innovation? [probe – government budgets; private sector investment; donor support; local income generation]

Which **actors** are providing sustainable financing?

What are the **strengths and limitations** of the model?

Is government able to financially sustain the innovation **without donor support**?

Is there **sustainable political support** for longer-term financing for the innovation?

Which **actors** support the sustainability of the innovation?

ACTIONS

What **actions** enabled/are enabling political support and financial sustainability of the innovation to be achieved?

Which **actors** performed/perform those actions?

Have these actions been **effective**?

Have mechanisms been put in place for ensuring the sustained flow of finances to ground?

CONTEXT

Are there **adequate** and **predictable** financial resources in the country context?

Were **actions** taken to overcome any barriers?

6. Institutionalisation

DESCRIPTION

Has the innovation been **embedded in country institutions** – health policies; health systems; health services? [probe – legal, regulatory, budgetary frameworks; routine information systems; logistics and supply chains; human resources systems, monitoring]

ACTIONS

What **actions** enabled/are enabling the innovation to be embedded within country institutions?

Which **actors** performed/perform those actions?

Have these actions been **effective**?

CONTEXT

Are country institutions supportive or undermining of the introduction of the innovation? Which aspects? How? [probe – legal, regulatory, budgetary frameworks; routine information systems; logistics and supply chains; human resources systems]

Were **actions** taken to overcome any barriers?

7. Organisational capacity / programmatic sustainability

CONTEXT

Does the health system have **sufficient capacity** to sustain the innovation? [probe – governance; financial systems; logistics and supply chains; information systems; human resources]

Are there **weaknesses** in the health system than make it difficult to sustain the innovation?

Were **actions** taken/will actions be taken to overcome any weaknesses?

ACTIONS

Have **actions** been taken/will actions be taken to strengthen aspects of the health system to enable the innovation to be sustained?

Which **actors** performed/perform those actions?

Have these actions been **effective**? How?

8. Routinisation in health worker practices

DESCRIPTION

Have VHWs been adopted as part of routine practices within the health system?

What incentivised HWs to **adopt** the innovation?

What incentivises HWs to continue to use the innovation within their **routine practices**? [probe - supervision, support and training updates; low effort to learn, use and remember; 'fun' and 'pleasurable' to use; gives HW a sense of agency and control; helps HW perform their roles; increasing HW status and ability to persuade others; improves HW pride and awareness of their effective performance]

ACTIONS

What **actions** have been taken/will be taken to encourage health workers to use the innovation within their routine practices?

Which **actors** performed/perform those actions?

Have these actions been **effective**? How?

CONTEXT

Are there **contextual** factors enabling or undermining health workers adopting the innovation within their routine practices? [probe – economic factors; geographical factors; sociocultural factors influencing HW behaviour]

Were **actions** taken to overcome any barriers?

9. Social sustainability

DESCRIPTION

Is there longer term acceptance of and demand for the innovation from beneficiary communities?

Are community structures and leaders supportive of the innovation?

Is there community ownership of the innovation?

ACTIONS

Have **actions** been taken/will actions be taken to foster acceptance, demand and ownership from beneficiary communities and support from community structures and leaders?

Which **actors** performed/performed those actions? [probe – actions to involve communities/community structures and leaders in designing and implementing the innovation?]

Have these actions been **effective**? How?

CONTEXT

Does the sociocultural **context** enable or undermine communities' acceptance of and demand for the innovation?

Were **actions** taken to overcome any barriers?

10. Aid effectiveness – behaviour of donors, government and implementers

How should **donors** behave (what approaches should they take) to foster scale-up and sustainability of externally funded innovations?

Probe –

Coordination – harmonisation and alignment and embracing country coordination mechanisms

Embracing country ownership including using existing country systems

Predictability of donor funding

Transparency and accountability

How should **governments** behave (what approaches should they take) to foster scale-up and sustainability of externally funded innovations?

Probe –

Coordination – promoting harmonisation and alignment among donors and implementers and government leadership of country coordination mechanisms

Civil society participation and engagement

Transparency and accountability

How should **implementers** behave (what approaches should they take) to foster scale-up and sustainability of externally funded innovations?

Probe –

Coordination – harmonisation and alignment and embracing country coordination mechanisms

Embracing country ownership including using existing country systems

Transparency and accountability