Various initiatives were identified to make school feeding efficient, nationally owned and sustainable throughout Mali at a learning event themed, the “Role of key stakeholders in the success and sustainability of school feeding in Mali”.

The event was hosted by Mali’s National School Feeding Centre (CNCS), with support from Imperial College London’s Partnership for Child Development (PCD) and Dutch development organisation SNV.

“The Government of Mali is strongly committed to promoting school feeding in order to face the challenges in education, health and nutrition for school-aged children,” said General Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Mr Souleymane Goundiam. He continued, “But, we must recognize that the national school feeding programme faces bottlenecks, especially given Mali’s recent political crisis, this workshop is therefore of particular importance.”

Close to 60 participants including national and local government officials, school management committees, donors, implementers, and guests from Ghana attended the workshop which was broken down into three main areas:

i) funding - focusing mainly on national budgets and procedures for school feeding and local management and reporting of funds

ii) community ownership - emphasizing on community engagement and participation as well as capacity building; and
iii) local procurement - in relation to regulations and available strategies to better link small holder farmers to school feeding programmes.

During the workshop experiences and good practices were shared and key support actions and strategies for ensuring the HGSF programme is implemented as sustainably as possible were drawn up. Mr Goundiam specifically the need to further develop Mali’s Sustainability Strategy, which put together by PCD and signed off by the Government acts as a guide for effective HGSF implementation.