

# THE HEALTH SYSTEM ASSESSMENT APPROACH: A HOW-TO MANUAL

Version 2.0

September 2012



# FOREWORD

A strong health system ensures that people and institutions, both public and private, effectively undertake core functions to improve health outcomes. It protects citizens from catastrophic financial loss and impoverishment resulting from illness or injury, and ensures consumer satisfaction, in an equitable, efficient and sustainable manner. Many low and middle income countries face significant challenges in providing essential health services due to inefficient use of resources, weak information systems, a limited health workforce, and other systemic challenges. However, even the most resource constrained health system can improve health outcomes by addressing critical systems gaps. Scientific advances, technological innovation, and economic growth provide countries with additional opportunities to address these gaps and expand and allocate resources for health more efficiently and equitably.

In order to design effective strategies for creating a strong health system, countries first must have access to critical information on the strengths and limitations of their system. An effective assessment tool must be flexible and participatory in order to respond to the context specific needs of each country. The tool must also be thorough and rigorous enough to provide solid evidence that will guide effective policy and decision-making. Since it was originally developed in 2004, the Health Systems Assessment Approach (HSAA) has been utilized in more than 24 countries, and has incorporated input from global experts across the field of health system strengthening. Since the first edition, the HSAA tool has evolved to respond to the changing requirements of systems strengthening efforts by incorporating elements that build greater local capacity; increase local stakeholder engagement; and increase the use of rigorous scientific methods while keeping the methodology as simple and user-friendly as possible. The result is a stronger HSAA Manual, Version 2.0, that facilitates a collaborative assessment process and provides a critical source of data to assist countries in developing effective strategies for strengthening their health system.

# CONTENTS

Acronyms . . . . . v

Acknowledgments . . . . . vii

## Section 1 Introduction to The Health System Assessment Approach and Manual

Module 1 Health System Strengthening and the Assessment Approach . . . . . 3  
 Module 2 About The Health System Assessment Approach Manual . . . . . 19

## Section 2 Conducting the Assessment

Module 1 Step 1 – Shape the Assessment . . . . . 31  
 Module 2 Step 2 – Mobilize Assessment Team . . . . . 43  
 Module 3 Step 3 – Collect Data . . . . . 49  
 Module 4 Step 4 – Analyze Findings and Develop Recommendations . . . . . 59  
 Module 5 Step 5 – Prepare the Assessment Report . . . . . 73

## Section 3 Guidance on Assessing Health System Building Blocks

Module 1 Country and Health System Overview . . . . . 83  
 Module 2 Leadership and Governance . . . . . 111  
 Module 3 Health Financing . . . . . 141  
 Module 4 Service Delivery . . . . . 177  
 Module 5 Human Resources for Health . . . . . 207  
 Module 6 Medical Products, Vaccines, and Technologies . . . . . 239  
 Module 7 Health Information Systems . . . . . 275

## Annexes

Annex 1 Section 1 Introduction to The Health System Assessment Approach and Manual . 303  
 Annex 2 Section 2 Conducting the Assessment . . . . . 307  
 Annex 3 Section 3 Guidance on Assessing Health System Building Blocks . . . . . 353  
 Annex 4 Bibliography. . . . . 383

## LIST OF TABLES

### Section 1 Introduction to The Health System Assessment Approach and Manual

#### Module 2 About The Health System Assessment Approach Manual

Table 2.5.1 HSA Report Review and Revision Process . . . . .	20
--	----

### Section 2 Conducting the Assessment

#### Module 1 Step 1– Shape the Assessment

Table 2.1.1 Sample Health System Assessment Variations and Rationales . . . . .	34
Table 2.1.2 Options for Developing Local Capacity in the HSA Approach . . . . .	35
Table 2.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities of the Assessment Team. . . . .	37

#### Module 2 Step 2 – Mobilize Assessment Team

Table 2.2.1 Illustrative Schedule for the Field Data Collection (Including validation workshop during the current or a follow-up visit) . . . . .	46
Table 2.2.2 Template Assessment Budget . . . . .	47

#### Module 3 Step 3 – Collect Data

Table 2.3.1 Number of Sites Visited in Select Health System Assessments . . . . .	55
Table 2.3.2 Options for Stakeholder Workshops . . . . .	56

#### Module 4 Step 4 – Analyze Findings and Develop Recommendations

Table 2.4.1 Key Issues Affecting the Building Blocks from Guyana HSA 2010 . . . . .	68
---	----

#### Module 5 Step 5 – Prepare the Assessment Report

Table 2.5.1 HSA Report Review and Revision Process . . . . .	79
--	----

### Section 3 Guidance on Assessing Health System Building Blocks

#### Module 1 Country and Health System Overview

Table 3.1.1 Major Causes of Mortality In Guyana, 2008 . . . . .	86
Table 3.1.2 Framework for Assessing Availability of Capacity to Guide and Strengthen the Health System. . . . .	90
Table 3.1.3 Template: Country’s Service Delivery System: Facilities and Human Resources . . . . .	95
Table 3.1.4 Indicator and Topic Map for Health System Overview Module . . . . .	98
Table 3.1.5 Health System Overview Indicators . . . . .	100
Table 3.1.6 Donor Mapping Matrix, Angola (2005) . . . . .	104
Table 3.1.7 Comparison of Donor and Government Interventions in the Health Care System in Angola (2005) . . . . .	106

#### Module 2 Leadership and Governance

Table 3.2.1 Indicator Map—Leadership and Governance . . . . .	118
Table 3.2.2 Overlapping Topics between Governance and Other Health System Technical Modules . . . . .	121
Table 3.2.3 Key Indicators Table . . . . .	133
Table 3.2.4 Template Summary of Findings—Leadership and Governance Module . . . . .	135
Table 3.2.5 Guyana HSA Leadership and Governance SWOT 2011 . . . . .	135
Table 3.2.6. Suggested Leadership and Governance Indicators Addressing the Key Health System Performance Criteria . . . . .	136
Table 3.2.7 Illustrative Recommendations for Governance Issues. . . . .	137

#### Module 3 Health Financing

Table 3.3.1 Indicator Map—Health Financing . . . . .	150
Table 3.3.2 Template; MOH Budget Trends: Authorized or Planned and Actual Expenditures. . . . .	156
Table 3.3.3 Characteristics of Insurance Schemes: National Health Insurance, Social Health Insurance, and Private Health Insurance. . . . .	163
Table 3.3.4 Key Indicators Table . . . . .	169
Table 3.3.5 Template: Summary of Findings—Health Financing Module. . . . .	170
Table 3.3.6 Summary of SWOT Findings for Equity, Access, Efficiency, Quality, and Sustainability From the Health Financing Module, Ukraine (2011) . . . . .	171
Table 3.3.7 List of Health Financing Indicators Addressing the Key Health System Performance Criteria. . . . .	172
Table 3.3.8 Illustrative Recommendations for Health Financing Issues . . . . .	173
Table 3.3.8 Illustrative Recommendations for Health Financing Issues, cont.. . . . .	174

<b>Module 4 Service Delivery</b>	
Table 3.4.1 Summary of Issues to Address in Stakeholder Interviews . . . . .	182
Table 3.4.2 Indicator Map—Health Service Delivery . . . . .	185
Table 3.4.4 Illustrative Presentation of Summary of Findings . . . . .	203
Table 3.4.6 Illustrative Recommendations for Service Delivery Issues . . . . .	204
Table 3.4.5 List of Suggested Service Delivery Indicators Addressing the Key Health System Performance Criteria . . . . .	204
Table 3.4.6 Illustrative Recommendations for Service Delivery Issues cont... . . . .	205
Table 3.4.3 Template: Indicator Findings—Health Service Delivery . . . . .	202
<b>Module 5 Human Resources for Health</b>	
Table 3.5.1 Indicator Map—Human Resources. . . . .	214
Table 3.5.2 Summary of Findings—Human Resources for Health Chapter. . . . .	232
Table 3.5.3 Performance of Human Resources for Health in Terms of the Health System Assessment Criteria . . . . .	233
Table 3.5.4 List of Human Resources Indicators by Health System Performance Criteria . . . .	233
Table 3.5.5 Illustrative Recommendations for Human Resource Issues . . . . .	235
Table 3.5.5 Illustrative Recommendations for Human Resource Issues cont... . . . .	236
<b>Module 6 Medical Products, Vaccines, and Technologies</b>	
Table 3.6.1 Indicator Map—Managing Medical Products, Vaccines, and Technologies . . . . .	250
Table 3.6.2 Key Indicators . . . . .	267
Table 3.6.3 Template: Summary of Findings—Medical Products, Vaccines, and Technologies Module. . . .	268
Table 3.6.4 Summary of Findings – Medical Products, Vaccines, and Technologies Module . . . .	269
Table 3.6.5 List of Suggested Medical Products, Vaccines, and Technologies Indicators Addressing the Key Health System Performance Criteria . . . . .	270
Table 3.6.6 Illustrative Recommendations for Medical Products, Vaccines, and Technologies Issues	272
<b>Module 7 Health Information Systems</b>	
Table 3.7.1 Indicator Map—Health Information System . . . . .	282
Table 3.7.2 Key Indicators . . . . .	295
Table 3.7.3 Template: Summary of Findings—Health Information System Module . . . . .	296
Table 3.7.4 Key Findings in the HIS module from St Lucia . . . . .	297
Table 3.7.5 List of Suggested Indicators Addressing the Key Health System Performance Criteria	297
Table 3.7.6 Illustrative Recommendations for Strengthening Health Information Systems. . . .	298

## LIST OF FIGURES

### Section 1 Introduction to The Health System Assessment Approach and Manual

#### Module 1 Health System Strengthening and the Assessment Approach

Figure 1.1.1 Health System Assessment Countries, 2005-2011 . . . . .	5
Figure 1.1.2 Building Block Interactions . . . . .	9
Figure 1.1.3 Range of Public and Private Sector Actors the Health System organized by the Six Building Blocks . . . . .	10
Figure 1.1.4 Structure of the Public Health Care System in Vietnam. . . . .	11
Figure 1.1.5 Multiple Roles of People in Health Systems . . . . .	14

#### Module 2 About The Health System Assessment Approach Manual

Figure 1.2.1 The Evolution of the HSAA Manual . . . . .	20
Figure 1.2.2 Steps in the Health System Assessment Approach. . . . .	24

### Section 2 Conducting the Assessment

#### Module 1 Step 1– Shape the Assessment

Figure 2.1.1 Steps in the Health System Assessment Approach . . . . .	32
---	----

#### Module 2 Step 2 – Mobilize Assessment Team

Figure 2.2.1 Steps in the Health System Assessment Approach . . . . .	44
---	----

#### Module 3 Step 3 – Collect Data

Figure 2.3.1 Steps in the Health System Assessment Approach . . . . .	50
---	----

#### Module 4 Step 4 – Analyze Findings and Develop Recommendations

Figure 2.4.1 Steps in the Health System Assessment Approach . . . . .	60
Figure 2.4.2 HSA Approach to Analyzing Findings . . . . .	62
Figure 2.4.3. Description of a SWOT Analysis . . . . .	64
Figure 2.4.4 Sample SWOT on Health Information Systems, St. Lucia . . . . .	65
Figure 2.4.5 Sample: Verified SWOT for Financing Building Block . . . . .	66
Figure 2.4.6 Root Cause Analysis Using a Fishbone Diagram . . . . .	69

#### Module 5 Step 5 – Prepare the Assessment Report

Figure 2.5.1 Steps in the Health System Assessment Approach . . . . .	74
---	----

### Section 3 Guidance on Assessing Health System Building Blocks

#### Module 1 Country and Health System Overview

Figure 3.1.1 Impact of Building Block Interactions . . . . .	84
Figure 3.1.2 Organogram of the Ministry of Health of Uganda. . . . .	94

#### Module 2 Leadership and Governance

Figure 3.2.1 Impact of Building Block Interactions . . . . .	112
Figure 3.2.2 Health Governance Model . . . . .	115

#### Module 3 Health Financing

Figure 3.3.1 Impact of Building Block Interactions . . . . .	142
Figure 3.3.2 Health Financing Flow . . . . .	146

#### Module 4 Service Delivery

Figure 3.4.1 Building Block Interactions . . . . .	178
Figure 3.4.2 System View of Service Delivery . . . . .	181
Figure 3.4.3 Sample: Health Sector Pyramid (public and private sector) . . . . .	183
Figure 3.4.4 Example: Ukraine Health Service Delivery Levels, . . . . .	184

#### Module 5 Human Resources for Health

Figure 3.5.1 Impact of Building Block Interactions . . . . .	208
Figure 3.5.2 The GHWA HRH Action Framework . . . . .	210

#### Module 6 Medical Products, Vaccines, and Technologies

Figure 3.6.1 Impact of Building Block Interactions . . . . .	240
Figure 3.6.2 Framework for Managing Medical Products, Vaccines, and Technologies . . . . .	243
Figure 3.6.3 Typical Country Distribution Systems . . . . .	244
Figure 3.6.4 Direct Delivery Model for Distribution . . . . .	245
Figure 3.6.5 Components of the Public Selection Process System . . . . .	246
Figure 3.6.6 The Procurement Cycle . . . . .	247
Figure 3.6.7 The Distribution Cycle . . . . .	248
Figure 3.6.8 Sample Fishbone Diagram of Managing Medical Products,. . . . .	271

**Module 7 Health Information Systems**

Figure 3.7.1 Impact of Building Block Interactions . . . . .	276
Figure 3.7.2 The HMN Framework for Health Information Systems. . . . .	278
Figure 3.7.3 HIS Needs by Level of Data Collection. . . . .	280
Figure 3.7.4 Schematic of an Integrated HIS. . . . .	288



# ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIS	AIDS Indicator Survey
ANC	Antenatal Care
ARV	Antiretroviral
BBP	Basic Benefits Package
CBHI	Community-Based Health Insurance
CD	Compact Disc
CHW	Community Health Worker
DALY	Disability Adjusted Life Years
DHIRO	District Health Records and Information Officer
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DTC	Drug and Therapeutics Committee
DTP	Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunization [WHO]
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIS	Health Information System or Systems
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HMN	Health Metrics Network
HR	Human Resources
HRH	Human Resources for Health
HRIS	Human Resources Information System
HRM	Human Resources Management
HSA	Health System Assessment
HSAA	Health System Assessment Approach
HSS	Health System Strengthening
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INN	International Nonproprietary Name
IT	Information Technology
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, Practices
km	Kilometer
LOE	Level of Effort
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
mg	Milligram
ml	Milliliter
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding

MSH	Management Sciences for Health
NDRA	National Drug Regulatory Authority
NEML	National Essential Medicines List
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NHA	National Health Accounts
NMP	National Medicines Policy
OOP	Out-of-Pocket
ORS	Oral Rehydration Solution
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation In Europe
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PHC	Primary Health Care
PHR <i>plus</i>	Partners for Health Reform <i>plus</i>
PMI	Private Medical Institution
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRISM	Performance of Routine Information System Management
RHIS	Routine Health Information System
SD	Service Delivery
SHI	Social Health Insurance
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SOW	Scope of Work
SPA	Service Provision Assessment
STG	Standard Treatment Guideline
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TB	Tuberculosis
TB-DOTS	Tuberculosis – Direct Observation Treatment Short Course
THE	Total Health Expenditure
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPM	Team Planning Meeting
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USD	U.S. Dollar
WDI	World Development Indicators [World Bank]
WHO	World Health Organization

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*The Health Systems Assessment Approach: A How-To Manual Version 1.0* (HSAA manual) was published in 2007 at the request of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through a collaboration of three of its initiatives: Health Systems 20/20, the Quality Assurance Project, and Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus.

Health Systems 20/20 has updated Version 1.0 of the HSAA manual to create Version 1.95 based on lessons learned through documented application of the tool in more than 30 countries and the invaluable inputs of many contributors and reviewers. We believe these inputs will enable more systematic assessments of health systems in developing countries.

The successful collaboration of so many contributors and the extent of our lessons learned from field applications would not have been possible without the commitment and guidance of Karen Cavanaugh, Laura Harley Andes, Bob Emrey, Scott Stewart, Jessica Forrest, and Jodi Charles of USAID/Washington. We owe our sincere thanks to the following individuals who were involved as contributors and/or reviewers in the process:

ACCESS-FP Program - Cat McKaig

Capacity Project - Jim McCaffrey and Kate Tulenko

DELIVER Project - David Sarley

Extending Service Delivery (ESD) - Milka Dinev

Health Care Improvement Project - Lauren Crigler and Lynne Miller Franco

Health Policy Initiative - Tito Coleman, Nadia Carvalho, Anita Datar Garten, and Suneeta Sharma

Health Systems 20/20 - Denise Averbug, Derick Brinkerhoff, Slavea Chankova, Grace Chee, Catherine Connor, Julie Doherty, Mursaleena Islam, Eddie Kariisa, Ann Lion, Marc Luoma, Takondwa Mwase, Ha Nguyen, John Palen; Nirmala Ravishankar, Josh Rosenfeld, Fred Rosensweig, Jim Setzer, Stephanie Schalk-Zaitsev, Lisa Tarantino, Amy Taye, Michael Rodriguez, Hong Wang, and Taylor Williamson

Health Metrics Network (HMN) Technical Support Project - Theo Lippeveld

Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP) - Koki Agarwal

MEASURE Evaluation - Anwer Aqil and Beatriz Plaza

MEASURE DHS - Shea Rutstein

Promoting the Quality of Medicines Program (PQM) - Patrick Lukulay

Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS) - Aneesa Arur, Barbara O'Hanlon, Kuhu Maitra, Vicki MacDonald, Gael O'Sullivan, Ilana Ron, Sara Sulzbach, and James White

Strengthening Pharmaceutical Systems (SPS) - Francis Aboagye-Nyame Kofi, Catherine Mundy, and Sameh Saleeb

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) - Jacob Adetunji, Laura Harley Andes, Susanna Baker, Jill Boezwinkle, Marisa Bohrer, Tony Boni, Alan Bornbusch, Karen Cavanaugh, Jodi Charles, Eunyong Chung, Gloria Coe, Forest Duncan, Bob Emrey, Marguerite Farrell, Jessica Forrest, Jim Heiby, Mai Hijazi, Troy Jacobs, Joel Kuritsky, Lisa Maniscalco, Jennifer Mason, Maria Miralles, Maureen Norton, Estelle Quain, Kelly Saldana, Lois Schaefer, Sarah Scheening, Elizabeth Schoenecker, Madeleine Short, Scott Stewart, Merri Weinger, and Kristina Yarrow

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - Michael Friedman and Michael St. Louis

U.S. Department of State - Paul Bouey

U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) - Jin Park

U.S. Peace Corps - Pamela Martin

We would also like to thank Linda Moll, Maria Claudia DeValdenebro, and Michele Abbott for their contributions to the editing, layout and design of the manual.