

Framework for initiating the process of implementing change by international development partners

At the December 2012 IHP+ meeting in Nairobi, participants identified a number of critical areas where behaviour change by international development partners is needed to accelerate progress on the MDGs. Recent meetings of global health leaders have strongly supported renewed action on seven behaviours which, if implemented, would bring visible results.¹ On this basis, two separate but interrelated sets of activities are being initiated. The first is international development partner change in relation to the seven areas, with organization-wide effect, and the second is about work in countries to fast-track implementation and learn about results. This note is about change by international partners to meet commitments to more harmonised and aligned ways of working. Action involves two core elements.

The first is a rapid but critical self-assessment for each of the seven areas to diagnose causes of current underperformance and to identify courses of action. In addition to internal discussions within agencies, the diagnosis should take account of information already generated from IHP+'s in-country reviews. The results of the diagnosis should be shared with other development partners to enable learning from each other's experiences.

The second is to clearly articulate targets and set out a suitable timeframe for implementing change in all or some of the seven potential action areas. For five of these, there are fairly well-established benchmarks to refer to. For two (technical support, south-south cooperation), additional conceptual work may be needed to capture current approaches and to define baselines and benchmarks with regard to greater harmonisation and alignment in these areas.

1. Diagnosis/Self Assessment

Participating international development partners engage in internal consultations with all relevant parts of their organisation to identify the underlying reasons for gaps and inconsistencies between commitments, policy and practice. IHP+ can provide support to facilitate these discussions, if desired.

For each of the seven behaviours, agencies will consider the following:

- What are the current policies? Are these in line with international commitments?
- Is existing guidance on standard operating procedures consistent with policy intent? Are there any rules that contradict policy? How much flexibility is there in interpreting policy and applying rules and guidelines in different country contexts?
- To what extent does actual practice in the field differ from given policy directions and organisational rules? What messages have been received from field offices

¹ See Note for the Record for 3rd Informal Meeting of Global Health Leaders, April 18, 2013, Washington DC

about implementation issues which may require clearer policy guidance and/or adjustment of relevant rules and procedures?

2. Key Actions, Milestones and Expected Results

Based on the diagnosis, and taking on board internal and external opportunities to introduce change, each agency defines specific actions to be undertaken within a defined time frame. A clear understanding of current practice as well as agreed benchmarks ('gold standard') to be achieved will be required to inform action. A set of milestones will be defined to help track progress. These milestones are about policy action and changes in rules and procedures that should facilitate putting agreed harmonisation and alignment principles into practice. They will be linked to the monitoring of actual changes in practice and ensuing results at country level (see framework for fast track countries).