Using governance roadmaps to accelerate progress toward health goals

Governance for universal access to sexual and reproductive health, ending preventable child and maternal deaths, and achieving AIDS-free generation
About the LMG Project

Funded by the USAID, the Leadership, Management and Governance (LMG) Project (2011-2017) is collaborating with health leaders, managers and policy-makers at all levels to show that investments in leadership, management and governance lead to stronger health systems and improved health. The LMG Project embraces the principles of country ownership, gender equity, and evidence-driven approaches. Emphasis is also placed on good governance in the health sector – the ultimate commitment to improving service delivery, and fostering sustainability through accountability, engagement, transparency, and stewardship. Led by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), the LMG consortium includes the Amref Health Africa; International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF); Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH); Medic Mobile; and Yale University Global Health Leadership Institute (GHLI).

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1. Introduction

This document is an instruction and information manual to accompany the three governance roadmaps developed by the Leadership, Management, and Governance (LMG) Project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH). The roadmaps are:

1. The governance roadmap for ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health
2. The governance roadmap for ending preventable child and maternal deaths
3. The governance roadmap for achieving an AIDS-free generation

The document describes the rationale for developing the three governance roadmaps, the foundations and principles underpinning them, and their objectives, intended audiences, structure, and elements. More importantly, it clearly describes how to use the roadmaps and how to track progress along the road. The roadmaps are intended to be used by organizations and individuals working to accelerate progress toward their health goals.

At their core, the governance constraints, processes, principles, and practices are similar across the three health areas. The key stakeholder groups will differ across health areas, and examples from the field included in the roadmap will be specific to the health focus area. Nonetheless, the governance actions, milestones, tools, and resources, with suitable adaptations, can be applied to other health areas as well, such as malaria and tuberculosis.

2. Rationale

Why three health areas

In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) era, the world is pursuing ambitious health goals such as ending preventable child and maternal deaths, ending the epidemics of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, reducing deaths resulting from non-communicable diseases and traffic accidents, and enabling universal access to sexual and reproductive health services. Universal health coverage, neglected tropical diseases, hepatitis, water-borne diseases, substance abuse, mental health, air, water and soil pollution, and tobacco control are also addressed in the SDGs. Of the 13 SDG health targets, ending preventable child and maternal deaths, enabling universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, and achieving AIDS-free generation are also USAID priorities. Despite significant progress made under the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in these priority areas, we are not there yet. The road ahead is challenging and we need new ways of tackling the barriers we face in moving forward.

Why governance

Public health approaches alone will not be enough to reach the ambitious health goals. Evidence-based health interventions are well known, but their impact is limited by common barriers such as lack of access, poor quality of services, and exclusion of vulnerable populations.

These barriers persist due to underlying governance issues related to how decisions are made, how power is distributed, and how systems and structures are organized. Governance is setting shared strategic direction and objectives, making policies, laws, rules, regulations, or decisions, and raising and
deploying resources to accomplish strategic goals and objectives, and making sure that the strategic
goals and objectives are accomplished. Increased awareness and action to address governance issues is
needed to accelerate progress toward the health goals.

Furthermore, robust and resilient health systems are needed to achieve these goals. Significant work
remains to be done in strengthening the health system building blocks – information, medicines,
financing, human resources, and service delivery. Leadership, management, and governance bring these
building blocks together, make them work as a system, and enable them to deliver results on a long-
term basis.

Good governance enables effective and efficient management of people, money, medicines, and
information. Sound management facilitates the work of doctors, nurses, and other health workers,
ensuring they provide safe, timely, effective, and efficient services that are respectful of and
responsive to individual patient and health service user preferences, needs, and values.

How a health system is governed is a powerful determinant of its performance. Poor governance
impedes organizational performance. Effective governance of the health systems, health organizations,
health sector, and other sectors that contribute to improving health can accelerate progress toward
health goals.

Why a governance roadmap

Health policy makers, program designers and implementers, and public health practitioners are often not
aware of how to promote good governance and may not have the tools to influence governing bodies
and their governance decisions.

As strategic management tools, roadmaps force deep thinking, explain where teams are going, and
subsequently help everyone stay on track. The governance roadmaps apply this private sector approach
to support more effective global health planning and program design.

These governance roadmaps are practical guides to better understand the role of governance in the
advancement of priority health areas at various levels of the health system. They allow for the
identification of barriers and governance actions to overcome them, provide lessons from others in
similar settings, and tools and resources to support governance actions.

3. Foundations and structure of the roadmap

Foundations of the roadmap

The governance roadmaps build on the work of the LMG Project in governance for health and represent
a synthesis of the expertise and experience of an array of governance and global health professionals and
organizations.

The approach to strengthening health governance developed by the LMG Project is based on five key
practices: 1) cultivating accountability, 2) engaging stakeholders, 3) setting shared strategic direction, 4)
stewarding resources, and 5) continuous governance improvement. These key practices, distilled from
reviews of literature, surveys, key informant interviews, and roundtable discussions, have been field-
tested and applied in a variety of public and private health systems.

The LMG Project also organized a series of roundtable conferences on governance for health. These day-long events brought together 30-40 governance and public health experts, thought leaders, and practitioners to discuss a set of core governance principles. These principles informed the development of the governance roadmaps:

1. Focus on equity and inclusion
2. Collect and use disaggregated data at global, country, and local level
3. Intentionally design health interventions to incorporate governance practices
4. Create incentives for individuals and organizations
5. Invest in transparency and accountability mechanisms
6. Nurture political will
7. Foster citizen engagement
8. Work across sectors
9. Build governance capacity
10. Generate evidence on the impact of integrating governance in health interventions

Objectives

The governance roadmaps have two objectives:

1. Provide overarching strategic direction for investing in governance to attain health objectives
2. Serve as a practical guide for utilizing governance to overcome pressing barriers to health goals, specifically three of USAID’s priority health areas

Intended audience

Health and governance officers at USAID missions and in the USAID Washington office are the primary audience for the roadmaps. The roadmaps will also be of interest to USAID implementing partners, other donors, international organizations, governments, and civil society organizations working in any of the three priority health areas.

Structure

The roadmaps are structured to target specific barriers faced in each of the health areas at three levels of operation: 1) Health facility and community, 2) National, state, and district, and 3) International

Elements

Each governance roadmap consists of six elements. These elements help roadmap users identify answers to five key questions that must be considered to effectively plan their way towards the achievement of health goals.
Table 1: Elements of the roadmap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Element of the roadmap</th>
<th>Description of the element</th>
<th>Key question addressed</th>
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</thead>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>Common barriers to achieving success in the priority health area</td>
<td>What barriers are holding us back in our setting?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Underlying governance issues</td>
<td>Governance issues that commonly cause the barriers to persist</td>
<td>What are the underlying governance issues?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>Recommended governance actions to help overcome the barrier (specific ways to cultivate accountability, engage stakeholders, set shared direction, and steward resources)</td>
<td>What governance actions can we take to overcome these barriers?</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Milestones</td>
<td>Suggested milestones to use in monitoring progress along the road</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Case examples providing implementation experience from the field</td>
<td>What might these actions look like in practice?</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Tools and resources</td>
<td>Links to tools and resources to support the implementation of governance actions</td>
<td>What are the tools that will help me implement the governance action?</td>
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4. How to use

The three governance roadmaps are available at www.LMGforHealth.org. The file format of the roadmap is PowerPoint Open XML Macro-Enabled Presentation (.pptm). In order to navigate and to experience full functionality, the PowerPoint file must be viewed in slide show mode. Once in slide show mode, use the buttons on the presentation slides to move back and forth. Do not use the arrow keys on your keyboard.

To start, click on the level that you are interested in: health facility and community, subnational and national, or international. You will see common barriers to achieving the health goal at this level. Click a barrier that you think exists in your own setting.

This will take you to the governance issues underlying the barrier. Click an issue that might apply in your setting. This will take you to governance actions you might consider taking alongside your stakeholders to address that issue. The slide also has maturity milestones to help you figure out where your health system is and measure progress should you and other stakeholders decide to take the action.
You will also find case examples that will help you understand how others have implemented the governance action and with what impact, and tools and resources to help you implement the governance action.

Essentially, you choose a level you are interested in and select a barrier you are facing. Upon selecting a barrier, you will see root causes related to governance. After becoming aware of the root cause, you can learn what you can do about it. You also have an opportunity to learn from how others have overcome the barrier through case examples. You can also access tools and resources to use in overcoming the barrier yourself.

**Tracking progress along the road**

Governance maturity milestones help determine how far the health system and jurisdiction have traveled along the road and suggest targets for where to go in the coming years. You will find examples of four levels of governance maturity within a health system reflected in these milestones. You can look at the examples provided of milestones for each governance constraint and assess where your system currently lies. Once you know where your system falls, you can put in place the recommended governance actions with the goal of progressing to the next higher level. The overall goal should be to achieve the highest level of governance maturity so that the health system functions at its highest potential.

For illustration, suppose the governance issue you want to tackle at the health facility level is not having people living with HIV represented in decision-making. In this scenario, the roadmap describes the governance maturity milestones as follows:

- **Milestone 1**: There is a governance or oversight committee at the health facility level
- **Milestone 2**: People living with HIV are represented on the committee
- **Milestone 3**: Representatives of the people living with HIV are able to meaningfully participate in the committee proceedings
- **Milestone 4**: Representatives of the people living with HIV are making it easier for them to access treatment, care and prevention services

The maturity milestones thus help you figure out where your health system is and then help you measure progress once you begin to implement the selected governance action.

**5. Similarities and differences across the three health areas**

The governance process, principles, and practices remain the same at their core. Salient issues may also be the same across the three health areas. For example, empowerment of women and young people, and strong health systems are at the heart of achieving the three health goals.

Barriers at the community and health facility level commonly pertain to difficulty in accessing services and poor quality of services, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. They face informational, socio-cultural, geographical, and financial barriers while accessing prevention, care, and treatment services, across all three health areas. Often, services received are delayed or inadequate.
The services are often poor in quality because of constraints in the health system and health facility (e.g., the facility is ill equipped with drugs, equipment, and supplies or lacks trained health workers to provide good quality care). Good governance practices include the vulnerable groups in decision-making processes, helping address barriers and improve accountability for services.

Inadequate leadership, governance, and management capacity at the facility level and at district, state, and national levels is a common barrier across all the three health areas. Disconnect between the community and the health facility is another common hurdle.

At the national and subnational level, political will, health system capacity, insufficient resources, lack of timely and accurate data, and weak performance accountability systems are common obstacles in all roadmaps.

At the international level, common constraints include competing agendas and priorities for spending global health resources, siloed global health funding, and donor inclination to invest their resources directly into service delivery interventions rather than into governance interventions.

While all three roadmaps address similar challenges, each is adapted to include case examples from the specific health area and places emphasis on specific groups of people affected. For example:

**Maternal and child health services:** Various groups of women face disadvantages and exclusion from critical maternal and child health services, including adolescents and young unmarried women, immigrants, refugees and internally displaced women, indigenous women, women from ethnic or religious minorities, women with disabilities, women living in poverty, urban slums, and fragile states, and women affected by humanitarian crises.

**Family planning:** In addition to groups of vulnerable women mentioned above, adolescent and young men are especially important to consider in the roadmap to ensure universal access.

**HIV and AIDS:** Disadvantaged groups also include key populations of men who have sex with men, sex workers, drug users and transgender people. HIV-related stigma and discrimination complicate the situation for these key populations.

### 6. Way forward

Governance plays a distinct role in helping overcome a range of barriers across health areas. We encourage you to interact with the roadmap relevant to you, and discover what governance actions are needed and feasible in your setting to accelerate the progress toward health goals. The best use of the roadmap is to work together with key stakeholders and brainstorm ways to make faster progress along the road, develop a shared plan of action, and begin implementing the plan.