

Sector-wide approaches to health provision

What is the SWAp?

The SWAp is not a funding instrument but a tried and tested approach for working partnerships between governments and development agencies to improve health systems. Countries such as Ghana, Zambia and Malawi have been using the SWAp approach for a number of years. These programmes took time to develop, but are now well-established and they have deepened the policy dialogue as well as leveraging additional funds. Procedures have been adapted to each country but all aim to achieve international best practice.

How does the SWAp work?

The SWAp operates at several levels, including:

The sector policy: The government takes responsibility for setting policies, priorities and standards which apply to all public activity in the sector, including those financed by development partners.

The sector expenditure programme: All significant funding for the sector supports a single-sector policy and expenditure programme which covers at least one year and is under government leadership, with the participation of key stakeholders.

Key messages: The sector-wide approach (SWAp) to health service provision can offer a variety of benefits to both governments and development partners.

- 1 The SWAp is not the same as budget support or budget pooling arrangements, such as 'basket' funding, it's a tried and tested approach for working partnerships between governments and development agencies to improve health services.
- 2 Jigawa state is in an ideal position to successfully implement the SWAp as it receives a high level of development support, and has an active reform agenda and workforce.

The sector partnership: Partners adopt common approaches across the sector and work towards relying on government procedures to disburse and account for all funds.

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan: Partners agree common M&E procedures and indicators of success, and rely on government procedures to measure progress.

The SWAp is not the same as budget support or budget pooling arrangements, such as 'basket' funding. This distinction is important and can be a source of confusion. At various stages of a sector programme, appropriate forms of assistance may include technical assistance, an earmarked project, commodity support, pooling of funds and untied budget support. The intention is that as the SWAp evolves – and trust and confidence increase – development partners will gradually move towards providing a greater part, if not all, of their support as untied budgetary assistance.

How the SWAp develops

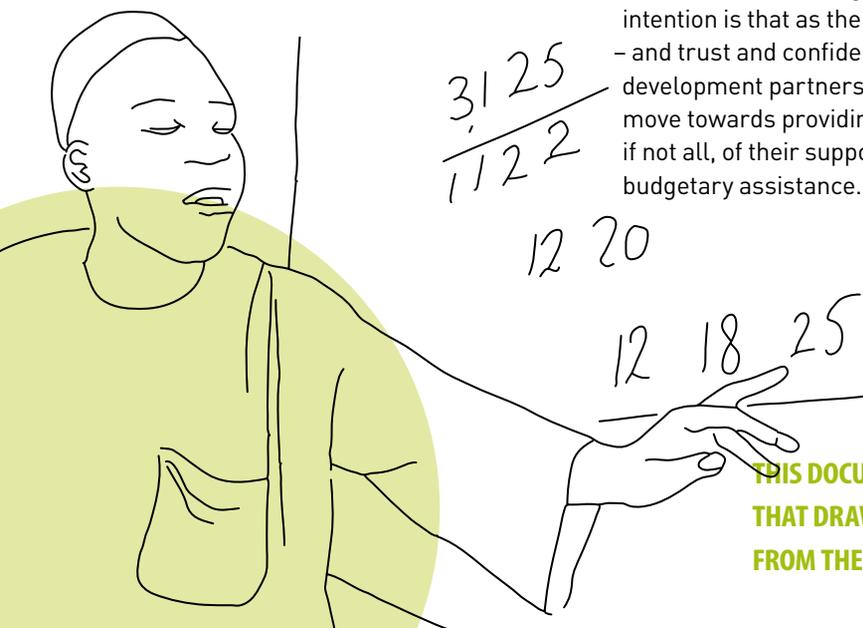
There are several typical stages involved in the development of a successful SWAp:

Analysis: The government must have a clear vision of its role in the sector and a will to make choices to fund priority programmes. Critical issues may need to be resolved at a senior political level.

Options: The government establishes the policy direction and priorities based on broad consultation in preparation of their programme. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector must be included in this process.

Dialogue: Dialogue must be established between the government, development partners and other stakeholders at the national and sector level. All development partners take a longer term view of development of the sector.

Monitoring and evaluation: Key indicators of sector performance need to be defined. They should not necessarily be conditional but should help measure progress.



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Strategy: The strategy is formulated, costed and linked to realistic resources. Annual budget plans are also created.

Implementation: Institution building is a key component of implementation.

Procedures: Procedures are agreed for discussing new policy and programme developments and dealing with disagreements. Progress, using common procedures, is sequenced:

- Capacity and confidence-building, beginning with joint assessments and reviews
- Common financial and procurement practices, which require a period of review followed by capacity and confidence-building
- A formal memorandum of understanding/code of conduct/aide mémoire, to reach consensus and set out management and implementation arrangements and the sources of finance

SWAp in Jigawa: progress to date

Jigawa state has begun to put the SWAp 'building blocks' in place, although there are still challenges to be addressed.

Effective leadership and institutional capacity: The state has demonstrated great commitment to the reform of the health sector and has a clear and relevant public policy goal. However, the private sector and civil society organisations have yet to be fully engaged and government control of development partner resources is limited.

Sector policy, strategy and plan:

There is increasing government ownership of policy formulation, strategy development and planning. However, these strategies have not been widely disseminated so most stakeholders are unaware of them and do not use them.

Sector expenditure framework:

The state health sector has taken steps to improve the budgeting process, and budgetary allocation and spending reflect the priorities of the health sector. Despite an increase in donor support in the health sector, the funding remains fragmented and is not properly integrated into the state budgeting process.

In general, there is much enthusiasm from government officials, development partners and civil society organisations (CSOs) on SWAp implementation. However, there are concerns about poor donor coordination and the challenges in the leadership and stewardship role of the State Ministry of Health (SMoH).

Benefits and difficulties

There are many benefits for both government and partners from the creation of a SWAp for health service provision.

The benefits for government

- All resources support the government strategy
- Government-defined expenditure programme and agreed consultation procedures reduce the costs of dealing with development partners
- Builds capacity without duplication
- Can increase donor commitments, on a longer term and in a less constrained form

The difficulties

- Obligation to consult
- High negotiation costs and uncertain returns
- Development partners may be slow to adapt (eg adopt common procedures)
- Risk of a loss of momentum if preparation is prolonged with slump in project commitments

The benefits for development partners

- Ensures a supportive policy environment so that aid programmes have sustained benefits
- Have an influence on policy across the whole sector
- Accountability is increased and wastage reduced

The difficulties

- Reduced visibility
- Risk of association with decisions they disapprove of
- Less scope to manage and control projects
- Need to compromise on idea of best practice
- Need to change procedures and relax control on use of donor funds

Policy implications

To create a successful SWAp in Jigawa, the following elements are all necessary:

Commitment to provide technical skills, time and other resources using the existing communication channels and networks to raise awareness among development partners, government and non-government stakeholders to build consensus on SWAp in Jigawa

A conducive operating environment for effective collaboration between partners and government created by reviving the existing mechanisms (including the health sector committee)

Support for the ongoing efforts to improve performance monitoring of the health sector in Jigawa.

Support for activities that will improve the alignment, harmonisation and use of government systems like the Gunduma pool account and a single HMIS.

Help to strengthen and reposition the SMoH so that it can provide effective leadership.



Partnership for Reviving Routine
Immunisation in Northern Nigeria;
Maternal Newborn and Child Health Initiative

The PRRINN-MNCH programme works with federal, state and local governments and local communities to improve the quality and availability of maternal, newborn and child health services.

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