

Sector Wide Approach to Health provision factsheet

This factsheet provides information for Jigawa State Ministry of Health, Development Partners and Civil Society Organisations.

It will help you make an informed judgment about the adoption of the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) in your area. 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.

What is the SWAp?

The SWAp is not a funding instrument but a tried and tested approach of working through partnerships between development agencies and Governments 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. They have deepened the policy dialogue and leveraged additional funds. Procedures have been adapted to each country but all aim to achieve international best practice.

How does the SWAp work?

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.

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 does not equate to 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.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

All development partners finance the same, Government defined, sector expenditure programme and establish agreed consultation procedures – including procedures to resolve disagreements. Changes in policy will not be implemented without prior consultation with development partners who will only support activities within the mutually agreed sector programme.

All development partners use agreed appraisal, procurement, disbursement, accounting and audit procedures based, as far as possible, on those of the Government. Common reporting and monitoring arrangements serve all development partner and Government needs and reduce the demands of development partners on Ministry time outside of SWAp meetings. Development partners minimize earmarking of funds where priorities are shared.

The Government is in control. Development partners negotiate aid with the central budget authorities consistent with the policies, resources and standards set by the Government. All technical assistance should focus on facilitation and capacity building.

How the SWAp develops

Analysis/diagnosis: 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. NGO 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 a form of conditionality but should help measure progress.

Strategy: The strategy is formulated, costed and linked to a realistic resource. Annual budget plans are 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 Memoir, to reach consensus and set out management and implementation arrangements and the sources of finance

There is a risk that an over emphasis on process can lead to inaction or poor policy content. The focus on results must remain realistic. SWAp have often been focused on expanding health provision, without the necessary improvements in efficiency.

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.

The State Sector Health Development Plan aligns state priorities and strategies with national/MDG priorities which are derived from the Comprehensive Development Framework and Nigeria's vision 20:2020. Despite this alignment, there is still some duplication of programmes.

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 CSOs on SWAp implementation. However, there are concerns about poor donor coordination and the challenges in leadership and stewardship role of the State Ministry of Health.

For Development Partners

The Benefits

- Ensures a supportive policy environment so that aid programmes have sustained benefits
- Have an influence on policy across the whole sector
- Fungibility is 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.

For Government

The Benefits

- All resources support the Government strategy
- The 'rules of the game' reduce the costs of dealing with development partners
- Builds capacity, no 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 (e.g. adopt common procedures)
- Risk of a loss of momentum if preparation is prolonged with slump in project commitments

Creating successful SWAp in Jigawa

Actions for State Ministry of Health, Development Partners and Civil Society Organisations

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Create a conducive operating environment to facilitate effective collaboration between partners and Government by reviving the existing mechanisms (including the health sector committee).
- ✓ Support the ongoing efforts to improve performance monitoring of the health sector in Jigawa.
- ✓ Support activities that will improve the alignment, harmonisation and use of government systems like the Gunduma pool account, single HMIS.
- ✓ Help to strengthen and reposition the SMOH so that it can provide effective leadership.