

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT RAPID ASSESSMENT TOOL

THE CHALLENGE: RESPONDING TO UNDERLYING HEALTH WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

More focused attention on strengthening the management of the health workforce is essential for improving service quality, coverage, and impact, as well as for ensuring that investments to increase the number of trained health workers are maximized and sustained. Strong human resources management (HRM) systems provide the enabling environment in which the health workforce can be effective. HRM is the integrated use of systems, policies, and practices required to provide the necessary range of functions to plan, produce, deploy, manage, train, and support the workforce. HRM focuses on people—how they fit within a health system and how they can be most effective. However, in many countries facing severe workforce limitations, HRM systems and capacity weaknesses are often overlooked. Additionally, the fragmentation of HRM functions and responsibilities among different stakeholders highlights the need for more coordinated and integrated approaches to strengthen HRM.

A SOLUTION: HRM RAPID ASSESSMENT TOOL

The HRM Rapid Assessment Tool assists policy-makers, managers, and human resources practitioners to understand, assess, and respond to underlying HRM issues and challenges facing the health system. The tool is user-friendly and adaptable to specific contexts, allowing the user to select appropriate HRM policy, strategy, and capacity interventions. The tool complements other tools and resources—in particular, the HRH Action Framework (<http://www.capacityproject.org/framework/>)—and is structured around the analysis of both existing and new information and data sources, supported by a series of defined questions and areas for further investigation. Its application can guide the user through an overall assessment of the HRM situation or be modified to focus on a specific problem or challenge—e.g., delays in health worker recruitment. The tool advocates for continuous engagement of key stakeholders in the assessment and analysis process, promoting ownership, commitment, and outcomes and proposed interventions that are responsive to local needs.

Depending on the context, indicative consultative and information sources for an assessment will be drawn from among the following: Ministry of Health departments, other ministries (e.g., public service, education, finance, local government), nongovernmental and faith-based organizations, regulatory and professional bodies, training institutions, development partners, and health workers. Examples of data sources include health sector policies, plans, and surveys; human resources strategies, policies, and evaluations; and public service information such as payroll, personnel regulations, and job descriptions.

BENEFITS

The HRM Rapid Assessment Tool supports the collection and analysis of information on a core set of HRM functions and related issues. It will help the user to identify achievements and challenges related to HRM policy, governance, and practice. The tool provides the evidence base to determine the most appropriate solutions and interventions to address HRM challenges in a systemic and holistic manner. It can also be used to examine HRM issues specific to a particular health program or intervention (e.g., HIV, tuberculosis, maternal and child health, preservice education, retention).

The tool supports access to and use of the HAF as a means of assessing and analyzing HRM issues in a comprehensive manner. It is aligned with the HRH Action Framework's *HR Management Systems* action field and adopts the key HRM functions defined in the HRH Action Framework as follows:

- Workforce planning and implementation
- Work environment and conditions
- Human resources information systems
- Performance management.

Collecting and analyzing existing and new data on these functions will provide a broad overview of the HRM situation, allowing the user to identify, further evaluate, and target specific HRM-related issues and challenges.

Based on the outcomes of the assessment, selected areas of intervention may include:

- Establishing an HRM baseline (e.g., staffing norms, availability, distribution, skills mix)
- Strengthening HRM stakeholder leadership, coordination, and implementation capacity
- Reviewing and developing HRM policy, strategy, and systems interventions—including prioritized resource mobilization and financing
- Targeting health workforce planning needs and capacity to support service delivery
- Addressing labor market supply dynamics
- Strengthening HRM systems (e.g., recruitment, deployment, retention, performance)
- Supporting preservice education, in-service training, and continuing professional development, including health training school management and infrastructure capacity
- Institutionalizing human resources information systems and data-driven decision-making
- Developing HRM monitoring and evaluation frameworks and undertaking impact assessments.