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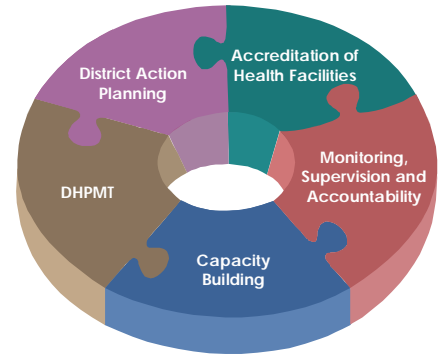
# District Action Planning

## Rationale

A district health plan sets out the goals and strategies that will enable a district to best meet the health needs of its population. It is based on the challenges identified and includes details of the funding allocated to implement the proposed strategies. District health system comprises highly interdependent elements, which include community, health care delivery system, and the external environment of that district. Sindh has heterogeneity among its districts in the context of demography and health care needs of their population. This perhaps reflects the difficulty of many of the issues, as health and population surveys have shown marked variation in healthcare outcomes across Sindh. Currently, scope of existing interventions at the district level is not matched by the capacity of their health systems to deliver them to those in greatest need, in a comprehensive way, and on an adequate scale.

There is evidence that organizational and management techniques can be used to address unwarranted variation, and district level planning is pivotal in tackling variations and diversity among the districts. In the post-devolution scenario, the structural changes require planning to be done at the district level. Devolution has also brought fiscal changes; a district is now provided with a one-line budget and the different sectors have to compete with each other to get a bigger share. The sector with a clear plan and understanding of its activities is in a stronger position to obtain a bigger share of the budget. District level planning will also, eventually, contribute to meet the commitments of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Figure 1: Components of strengthening district health management



## Methodology and Approach

Technical assistance will be provided to the Department of Health (DOH) in district level planning aimed at improving the health status of districts' population while safeguarding equity and fairness of access as well as responsiveness of the health system to the perceived needs of the community. Resultantly, annual action plans will be developed that will achieve healthcare outcomes through the provision of efficient and effective health services, taking into account available resources and the available means and methods of health care.

These actions plans will act as an advocacy tool for obtaining budget proportionate to health needs of the district.

District action plans will be developed for all districts of Sindh in a phased manner. These plans will be linked with the actions and outcomes detailed in Sindh Health Sector Strategy as well as Medium Term Development and Budget Frameworks. Hands-on support will be provided to the district management teams for development of action plans based on situation analysis of the district, and selection of locally responsive and evidence-based interventions.

Each district will notify a District Health Planning Committee (DHPC) having a core working group comprising key members of the district health management team. The core group will also include representatives from the provincial DOH as well as representatives from EDO (F&P), private sector and civil society. DHPC will have a close liaison with District Health Committee of the District Council after the local body's election. DHPC will review the annual report of the previous year, including expenditures and achievements against the targets.

A district profile will be developed on the current situation, including demographic information, health indicators, prevailing performance indicators, availability of current financial and human resources in the district, expenditures of the district,

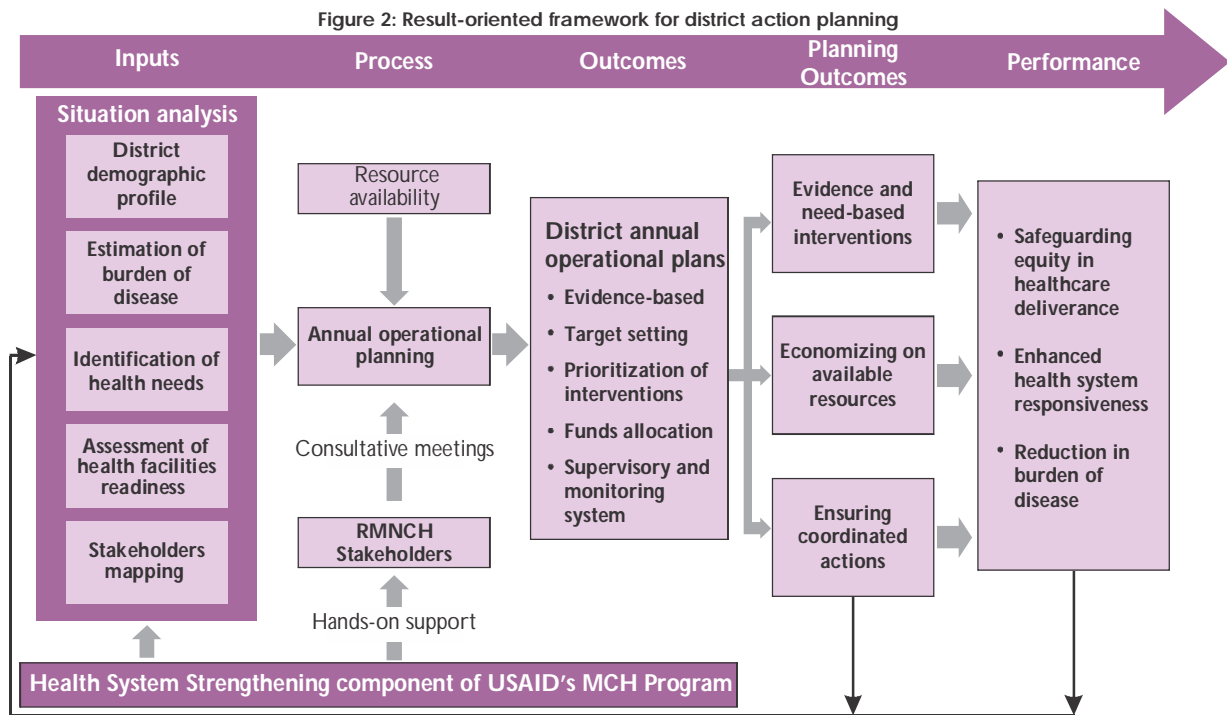
### Box 1: Attributes of Action Planning

- Identifying correctly community health needs and priorities.
- Assessing systematically the health care delivery system.
- Defining appropriate interventions based on identified problems.
- Ensuring equity in the distribution of services in the population.
- Coordinating on-going health care activities, including priority programs at the district level.
- Determining resource requirements with respect to various plan components, and make efficient use of new and available resources.

<sup>1</sup> Federal Bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan. (2010-11) Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey

expenditures of previous years, existing coverage of health care services, issues of equity, and capacities of health managers. DHPC will assess and review the district issues affecting the optimum health care delivery. After problem analyses, solutions will be found through brainstorming sessions and these solutions will be prioritized keeping available resources in mind.

District health departments will be provided with continuous support in identifying their health problems, designing and prioritizing interventions, setting targets, preparing budgets, and developing measurable indicators and monitoring frameworks for tracking progress against the action plans. In this regard, district managers will be provided support to develop necessary skills and knowledge. Moreover, strong support of health managers and supportive supervision will be integral to capacity building approach.



## Expected Results

District action plans will be prepared in all districts of Sindh. These plans will provide the way and means to control resources and monitoring and evaluation of planned activities and targets. Specific results of these action plans are as follows.

- Safeguarding equity in health care delivery by selecting targeted interventions for the poor and marginalized population of districts.
- Enhanced health system responsiveness through optimal allocation and maximum utilization of scarce resources.
- Reduction in burden of disease by prioritizing health needs and selecting appropriate and cost-effective interventions.
- Enhanced coordination and functional integration, and reduced duplication of efforts at district level by engaging all the relevant stakeholders working in the district.
- Optimum and judicious use of available resources.

### Box 2: Illustrative indicators for District Action Planning

Following illustrative indicators will be used for assessing performance of district action planning:

1. Number of districts having developed annual action plans.
2. Percentage accomplishment of activities and targets proposed by each district in its annual action plan.

## Next Steps

- Notification of District Health Planning Committee.
- Preparation of the district profiles.
- Review report on the previous year's reports and expenditure statements.
- Development and/or review of the planning tools.
- Technical support to build the capacity and provide guidance to DHPC to prepare realistic district plans.

*Health Systems Strengthening component of USAID's MCH Program is funded by the United States Agency for International Development and implemented by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. with Contech International, Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and Heartfile as consortium partners.*