



Royal Tropical Institute

**Assessment of readiness for a sector-wide  
approach in fragile states**  
A methodological framework

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Canavan, A., P. Vergeer and I. Rothmann (2009) *A rethink on the use of aid mechanisms in health sector early recovery*. Amsterdam: KIT.  
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## 1 Introduction

In the framework of support to health systems development in fragile states, the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) has undertaken operational research to identify the status of transitional funding aid mechanisms and explore determinants of aid effectiveness for health sectors recovering from prolonged conflict. Publications related to this research include:

- Canavan, A., Vergeer, P. & Bornemisza, O., 2008, *Post-conflict Health Sectors: The Myth and Reality of Transitional Funding Gaps*, Royal Tropical Institute, Netherlands, in collaboration with the Health and Fragile States Network and funded by DFID.
- Canavan, A., Vergeer, P. & Rothmann, I., 2009. *A rethink on the use of aid mechanisms in health sector early recovery*. Royal Tropical Institute, Netherlands funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS).

KIT aims to continue to support the work in fragile states while identifying priorities in collaboration with governments, donors and other stakeholders. One of the priority areas identified is to generate a better understanding of the progress that has been made with moving towards Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) in the early recovery health sector and how such practices can promote health systems recovery and service delivery. The findings will enable the Ministry of Health (MOH) and partners to develop a roadmap for improved policy and management within their health system that will contribute to more aid effective arrangements between the government and development partners. This Methodological Framework sets out the analytical process which will be undertaken to study the basic requirements of health sectors that are in the recovery phase and use mixed aid modalities in moving towards SWAPs.

## 2 Methodological approach

### 2.1 Analytical framework

The overall objective of the research is to generate a better understanding of the basic requirements for a SWAP while assessing the progress that has been made in an early recovery health sector and how such practices can promote health systems strengthening and service delivery.

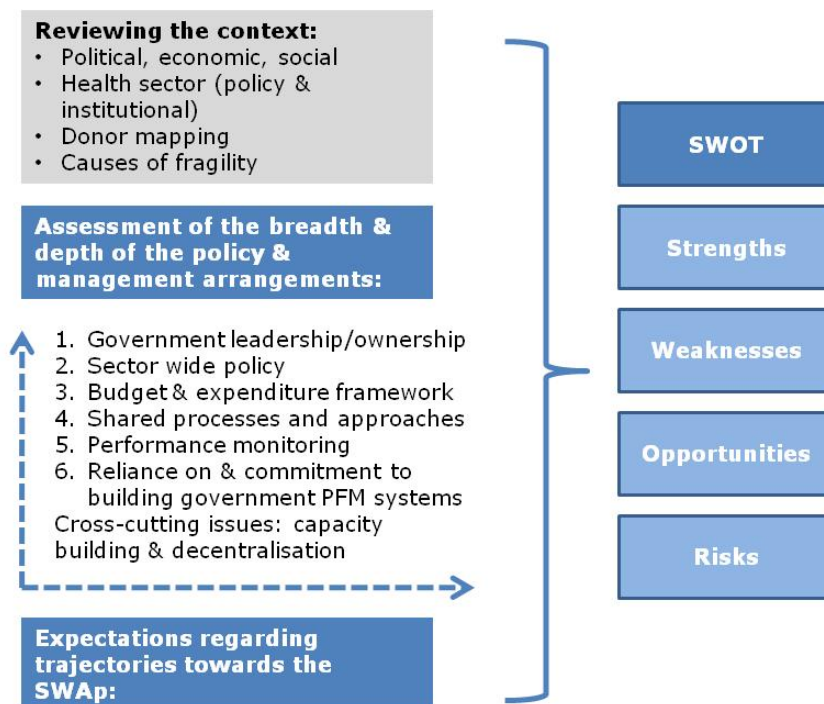
This will be achieved by learning from experiences with health sector SWAPs in non-fragile states and determining how the “lessons learned” can be used by countries undergoing recovery of health systems. To attain this aim, a review of the literature will identify the status, results and lessons learned from health SWAPs in non-fragile states.

Then, a full review of the essential components that are commonly included within a sector wide approach will be undertaken for the health sector of the fragile state in question, with a concrete assessment of the existing structures and processes that are regarded as SWAP elements<sup>1</sup>. An evaluation of the expectations regarding the different trajectories of moving towards a fully-fledged SWAP will be conducted with all relevant stakeholders in the health sector, including relevant line ministries and sub-national authorities, supporting donors and non-state actors.

In addition, a SWOT analysis will be undertaken which will identify the achievements and challenges of the sector-wide efforts as well as the risks and opportunities in moving ahead, in order to identify good practices and lessons for improved implementation.

The analytical framework is graphically presented in *Figure 1* below with more detailed information on each of the steps in following paragraphs.

**Figure 1 Analytical framework**



<sup>1</sup> Key elements: Sector policy, a budget & expenditure framework, government leadership, shared processes and approaches, performance monitoring, greater reliance on government PFM systems. Assessment of readiness for a sector-wide approach in fragile states; A methodological framework

*Evaluation of the breadth and depth of SWAP*

Different development partners have defined SWAPs and its key elements in slightly different ways. One of the more commonly quoted definitions is:

*All significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector and progressing towards relying on Government procedures for all funds.  
(Foster, M. 2000)<sup>2</sup>.*

In fact, SWAP are – as the European Commission highlights in its Guidelines on Sector Programmes<sup>3</sup> – a way of working together between government, development partners and other key sector stakeholders. It is a process aiming at broadening government and national ownership over public sector policy and resource allocation decisions within the sector, increasing the coherence between policy, spending and results, and reducing transaction costs.

Different descriptions of the core elements of a SWAP exist, but all are quite comparable. Table 1 on the next page presents a selection of the different definitions of core SWAP elements by various donor agencies or research institutions.

<sup>2</sup> Mick Foster (2000), Experience with implementing sector wide approaches, Overseas Development Institute, UK.

<sup>3</sup> EC (2007), Guidelines Support to Sector Programmes.

**Table 1 Comparison of definitions of SWAP core elements**

OECD DAC <sup>4</sup>	EC <sup>5</sup>	KIT SPR Tool <sup>6</sup>	Walford <sup>7</sup>
A clear nationally-owned sector policy and strategy.	Sector policy and strategy	Mission and policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mission statement</li> <li>• Pro-poor approach</li> <li>• Gender mainstreaming</li> </ul>	All significant funding agencies support a shared sector wide policy and strategy
A medium-term expenditure programme that reflects the sector strategy.	Sector budget and its medium-term perspective	Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linking strategies and mission</li> <li>• Priority setting</li> </ul>	A medium-term expenditure framework or budget which supports this policy
Systematic arrangements for programming the resources that support the sector.	Sector coordination framework under the leadership of the government	Structure and organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of the sector</li> <li>• Coherence of the sector</li> <li>• National ownership</li> <li>• Donor coordination mechanisms</li> <li>• Involvement of civil society</li> </ul>	Government leadership in a sustained partnership
A performance monitoring system that measures progress and strengthens accountability.	Institutional setting and capacities linked to capacity development	Systems Resource envelop* Use of data Human resources development	Shared processes and approaches for implementing and managing the sector strategy
Broad consultation mechanisms that involve all significant stakeholders.	Results-based performance monitoring system		Commitment to move to greater reliance on government financial management & accountability systems
A formalized government-led process for aid co-ordination and dialogue at the sector level.	Stable macroeconomic environment		
An agreed process for moving towards harmonized systems for reporting, budgeting, financial management and procurement	Improving public finance management (PFM) systems.		

For the purpose of this study we define – based on a comparison of the different definitions as presented in Table 1 - the core elements of a SWAP as follows:

1. **Government leadership** of the sector in a sustained partnership
2. A clear nationally-owned **sector policy** and strategy, derived from broad-based stakeholder consultation and which is supported by all significant funding agencies
3. A (medium-term) budget and **expenditure framework** which reflects the sector policy

<sup>4</sup> OECD/DAC (2006), Harmonizing Donor Practices for Effective Aid Delivery, Volume 2.

<sup>5</sup> EC (2007), Guidelines Support to Sector Programmes.

<sup>6</sup> KIT (2005), Sector Policy Review Tool, Royal Tropical Institute Netherlands.

<sup>7</sup> Walford, V. (2003), Defining and Evaluating SWAPs, A paper for the Inter-Agency Group on SWAPs and Development Cooperation, Institute for Health Sector Development. UK.

4. **Shared processes and approaches** for planning, implementing, managing the sector strategy
5. A sector **performance framework monitoring** against jointly agreed targets
6. Commitment to move to greater reliance on government **financial management and accountability systems**.

It is frequently highlighted that a SWAP should not be seen as a blueprint, but rather as a framework setting a direction of change - towards better coordinated and more effective organisation of the health services. This means that, at a given point in time, sectors and countries with SWAPs may not have all the above elements in place, or, at least, not to the same degree. Walford (2003) suggests that the stage of SWAP development can be characterized by looking at its 'breadth' and 'depth' of the approach:

- **Breadth** of the SWAP refers to whether a sector has all or only some of the six elements outlined above in place
- **Depth** refers to how important each of those elements is, and how effectively they are being implemented.

Each of the six SWAP elements will be analysed in terms of breadth and depth. This will help us to identify not only the stage of development of the health SWAPs in terms of breadth and depth but also in terms of scope of existing approaches (sector-wide versus sub-sector-wide) and average timeframes needed to bring a SWAP to its full potential.

Part of each analysis of the six elements will take a cross-cutting approach to assess institutional capacity within the Ministry of Health, as well as decentralisation.

As part of the contextual analysis, external forces that permeate and influence the direction and pace of developments for the health sector and beyond will be reviewed (e.g. changing political dynamics, public-private partnership reform).

Furthermore, a mapping of the engagement of the various stakeholders in the health sector will be undertaken, building on existing information (e.g. structure and function of the Health Sector Coordination Group, National Aid Coordination body etc.).

Scoring of each element (e.g. sector policy, budget, PFM etc) will be undertaken based on an aggregate score applied for each of the sub-criteria (see Table 2). Table 2 below presents a preliminary overview of the key issues to be assessed and tools to be used for each of the six core elements of the SWAPs.



**Table 2 Assessment of the key issues for SWAP readiness**

SWAP Element	Issues to be assessed	Tools
A clear nationally-owned sector policy and strategy, derived from broad-based stakeholder consultation and which is supported by all significant funding agencies;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nationally owned</li> <li>• Consultative &amp; widely shared (central &amp; local government, donors, civil society groups, community, private sector)</li> <li>• Policy coherence (i.e. link with PRSP, MDGs)</li> <li>• Alignment of donor support with sector policy</li> <li>• Sufficiently pro-poor</li> <li>• Results-focused &amp; monitorable</li> </ul>	Review of documents Interviews
Government leadership of the sector in a sustained partnership;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strength of leadership</li> <li>• Involvement in preparation, implementation, monitoring of health strategy</li> <li>• MOH coordination mechanisms</li> <li>• Commitment of own resources for capacity development</li> </ul>	Review of documents Interviews
A (medium term) budget & expenditure framework which reflects the sector policy;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency of policy with budget allocations &amp; actual spending (i.e. level &amp; composition inter &amp; intrasectoral)</li> <li>• Domestic and external financing in relation to public and private health spending</li> <li>• Existence of a supporting (multi-annual) budgeting process/MTEF</li> <li>• Alignment &amp; predictability of donor contributions</li> <li>• MOF &amp; MOH relations within budgetary process</li> </ul>	Review of documents Interviews NHA Review Mapping of sector financing
Shared processes and approaches for planning, implementing, managing the sector strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder mapping within the sector</li> <li>• Joint planning, financing &amp; managing processes</li> <li>• Sector coordination mechanisms</li> <li>• Level of harmonisation between donors, NGOs</li> <li>• Shared information &amp; analytical work</li> <li>• Joint, comprehensive capacity building approach</li> </ul>	Stakeholder analysis Review of documents Interviews
A sector performance framework monitoring against jointly agreed targets;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of M&amp;E tools (sectoral, PRS, MDG) and coherence among them</li> <li>• Institutional arrangement / relationships for monitoring financial &amp; non-financial information</li> <li>• Strength of Health Management Information System</li> </ul>	Review of documents Interviews
Commitment to move to greater reliance on and to build government financial management and accountability systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share of aid going through national system (systems alignment)</li> <li>• Improved budget processes</li> <li>• Increased allocation &amp; operational efficiency</li> <li>• Predictability of government funding to service delivery unit</li> </ul>	Review of documents (i.e. PEFA & other PFM assessment) Interviews MOF & MOH

## 2.2 Phases of the research study

The research study will be divided into 5 phases (illustrated also in Table 3 below):

1. Refining the methodological approach and terms of reference for the country
2. Literature review
3. Field study – including all stages of the methodological process for SWAp assessment of readiness
4. Synthesising experiences based on the findings and comparing with the lessons identified from non-fragile states. This will generate lessons on how effectively SWAp practices can promote health systems strengthening and service delivery in the early recovery health sector
5. Dissemination of report at both national and international levels

Our methods of data collection will include:

- Literature review – desk study
- Face-to-face and/or telephone interviews with development partners at headquarter and field level
- Collecting quantitative secondary data as regards the financing of the health sector in early recovery situations from relevant sector donor coordination forums and other government stakeholders
- Consultative processes with all key stakeholders whereby briefing and debrief workshops will be conducted

**Table 3. Indicative workplan for SWAp assessment of readiness**

Phase	Activities	Inputs Economist/Aid Effectiveness expert	Inputs Health Sector expert	Timeline
1. Methodological approach and terms of reference	Development of analytical framework and approach to study implementation	2 days	2 days	March 2009
2. Literature review		5 days	5 days	March 2009
3. Field phase (indicative for one case study country)	-Field mission -Report writing & follow-up	10 days 4 days	10 days 3 days	June/July 2009
4. Synthesis reporting (in case of cross-country comparison)	Synthesis and Articles for publication.	5 days	3 days	August 2009
5. Dissemination	Dissemination at conferences, within wider donor and academic/ research network	2 days	2 days	September-December 2009
<b>Total</b>		<b>30 days</b>	<b>37 days</b>	<b>67 Days</b>

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