

# *Health System Assessment Approach: Taking the temp of the health system*

**USAID/Global Health Bureau Mini-University 2008**  
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Abt Associates Inc.

In collaboration with:

| Aga Khan Foundation | BearingPoint | Bitrán y Asociados  
| BRAC University | Broad Branch Associates | Forum One  
Communications | RTI International | Tulane University  
School of Public Health | Training Resources Group

# Session Objectives

- Introduce systematic approach to
  - Assess a country's health system
  - Recommend health systems strengthening activities
- By the end of the session participants will
  - Develop understanding of the *Health Systems Assessment Approach: A How-To Manual*
  - Practice using approach in a country situation

# Session Agenda

- Welcome (5 min)
- Overview of *Health Systems Assessment Approach* (10 min)
- Using the tool to assess a country's performance – small group exercise (25 min)
- Report out top recommendation (10 min)
- Actual country recommendations (10 min)
- Invitation for feedback/Adjourn



# **Overview of the *Health Systems Assessment Approach***

# Why a health system assessment tool?

- Increased attention on health systems
- Big unclear concepts; “black box”
- Bridge knowledge gap between health generalists and health system specialists
- Existing tools (in early 2005) did not offer rapid, comprehensive health systems assessments
  - Some focused on profiles (PAHO, European Observatory)
  - None allowed for integration across health systems functions and included guidance to develop recommendations

# Tool Development Partners

- USAID/Global Health
- PHR*plus* (now Health Systems 20/20)
- RPM*plus* (now Strengthening Pharmaceutical Systems)
- QAP (now Health Care Improvement)
- Input from various external reviewers

# What's the Value Added?

## Value added of the Manual:

- Comprehensive
- Systematize and consolidate expertise
- Demystify “health systems strengthening”

## Value added of the Assessment Approach:

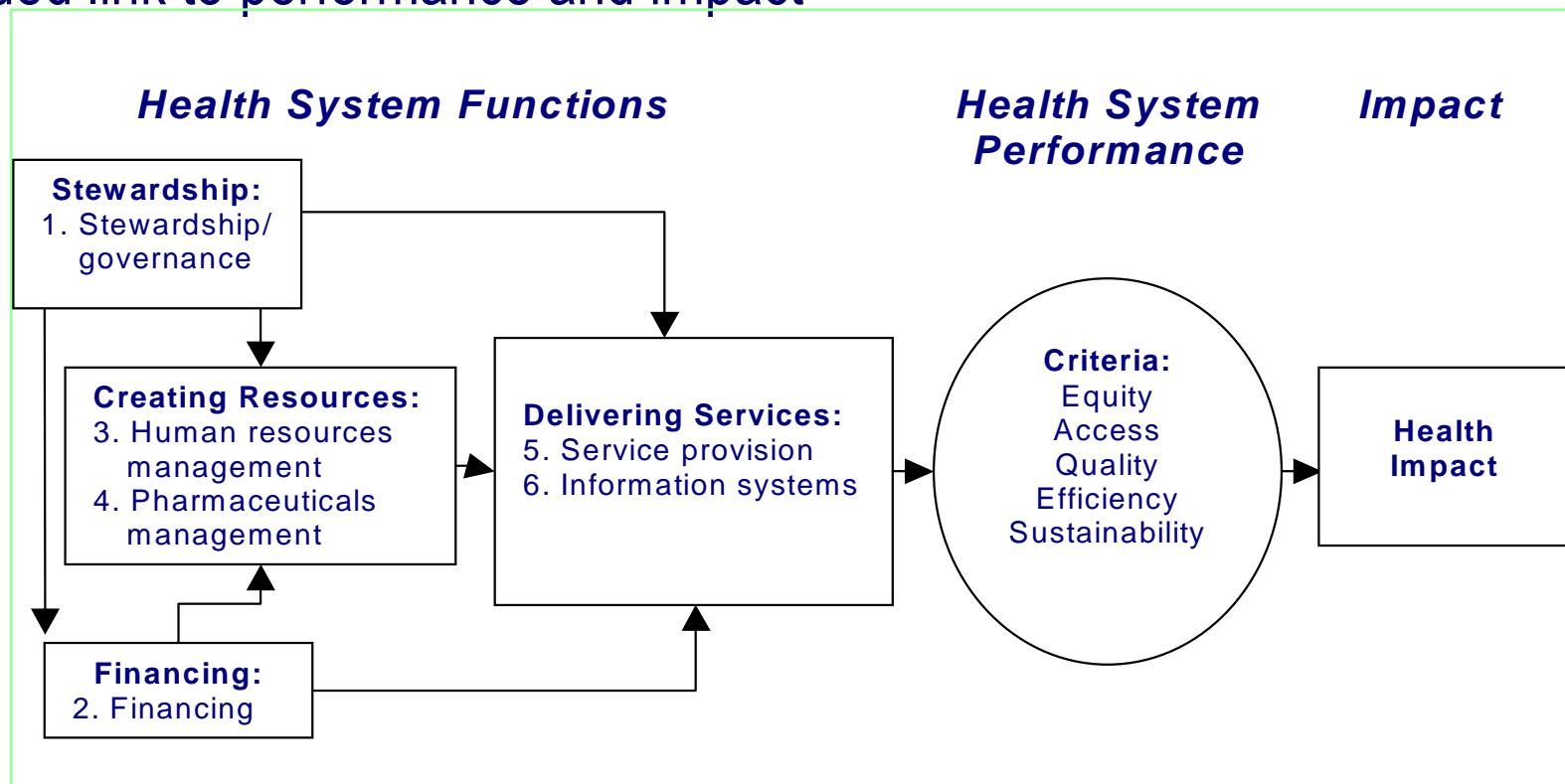
- Inform stakeholders of critical systems strengths and constraints
- Rapid
- Help prioritize interventions
- Create consensus and momentum to act

# What is inside?

- Tutorial on health systems strengthening
- Planning and conducting the assessment
  - Defining the scope of the assessment
  - How to organize the assessment team
  - Sample scopes of work, budget, schedule,
- Synthesizing findings, developing recommendations
- 6 Technical Modules

# Conceptual Framework

Drilled down into each function to structure assessment approach  
Private sector included in all functions  
Added link to performance and impact



# Overview of Approach

## Technical Modules:

Core (mandatory)

1. Governance
2. Health Financing
3. Human Resources
4. Pharmaceutical Managment.
5. Service Delivery
6. Health Information System

## Performance Assessment:

- Equity
- Access
- Quality
- Efficiency
- Sustainability

**Recommend Priority Interventions**

**Identification of Health System Strengths/Weaknesses**

# Each Technical Module Contains...

- Tutorial on the health system function
- Desk-based assessment:
  - Standardized indicators across countries
  - Data available electronically on *Health Systems Database*:  
<http://healthsystems2020.healthsystemsdatabase.org/>

# Health Systems Database

Health Systems data	Country level data		Average value of regional comparator		Average value for income group comparator		
	<b>Benin</b>	Year of Data	<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	Year of data	<b>Low income</b>	Year of data	Source of data
<b>Core Module</b>							
Population, total	8,177,208	2004	15,439,321	2004	43,077,991	2004	The World Bank-World Development Indicators-2006
Population growth (annual %)	3.21	2004	2.16	2004	2.28	2004	The World Bank-World Development Indicators-2006
Rural Population	54.66	2004	62.58	2004	68.6	2004	The World Bank-World Development Indicators-2006
Urban Population (% of total)	45.34	2004	37.42	2004	31.4	2004	The World Bank-World Development Indicators-2006
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)	18.6	2001	16.07	2001	19.21	2001	The World Bank-World Development Indicators-2006
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	5.7	2004	5.19	2004	5	2004	WHO-The World Health Report-2006
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	89.6	2004	92.24	2004	86.41	2004	The World Bank-World Development Indicators-2006
Mortality rate under-5 (per 1,000)	152	2004	149.43	2004	135.54	2004	The World Bank-World Development Indicators-2006
GDP per capita (constant 2000 US\$)	327.55	2004	931.54	2004	342.26	2004	The World Bank-World Development Indicators-2006

# Indicator Specifics in Each Module

For each indicator, the following information is provided:

- Definition
- Rationale
- Interpretation
- Suggested data sources
- Stakeholders to interview
- Links to other modules on cross-cutting issues
- Issues to explore
- Notes and caveats

# Tool Provides Strategy for Synthesizing Findings and Recommendations

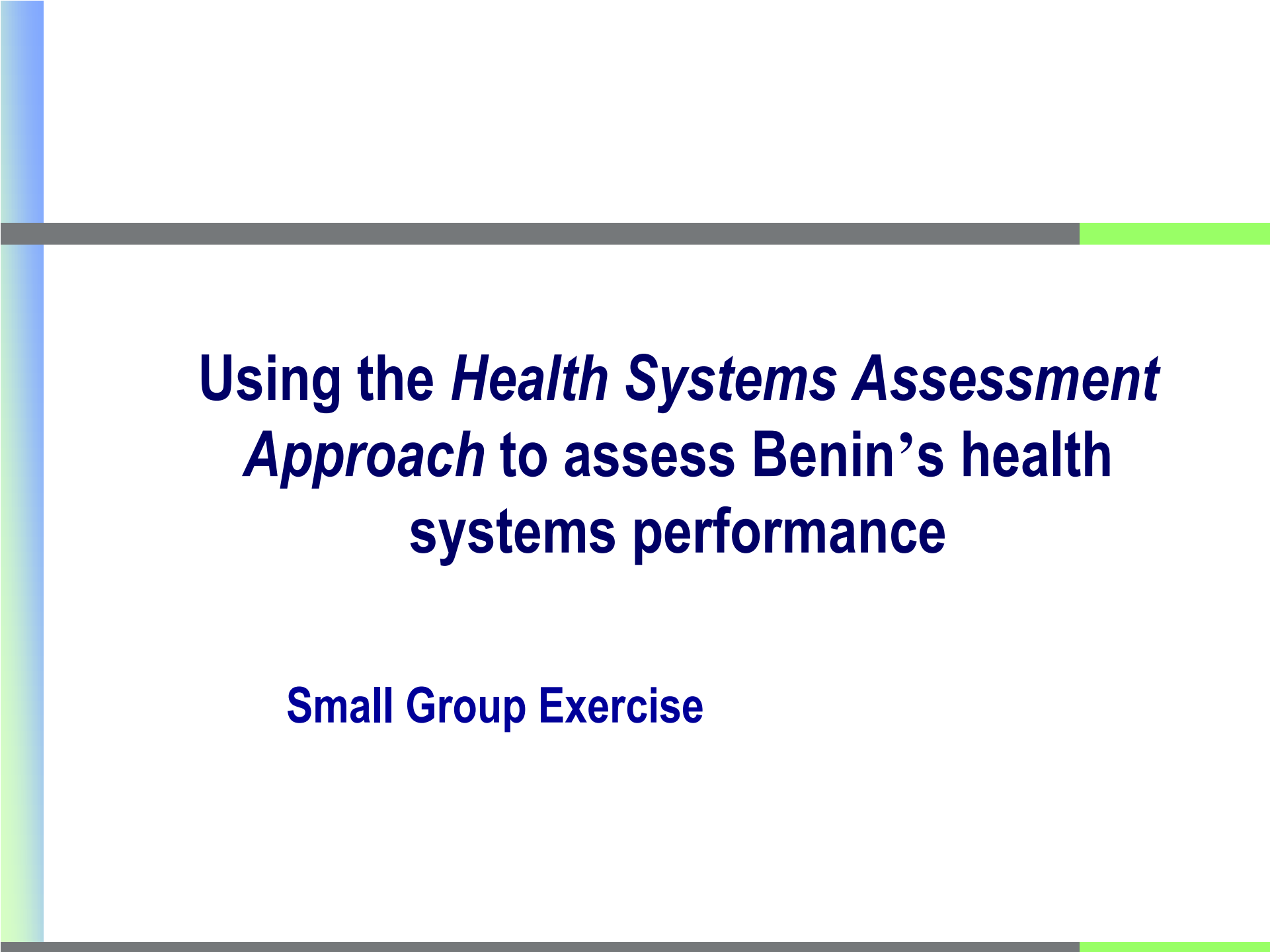
- For each module
  - Formats to summarize findings
  - Solutions to consider
- Across modules – analysis and prioritization
  - SWOT, root cause analysis, donor mapping
  - Integrated recommendations
- Validation of conclusions and recommendations through stakeholder workshop
- Refine and finalize findings based on feedback

# Documented use of the Tool to date

Countries	Audience	Objectives
Azerbaijan 2005	USAID	Input into pharmaceutical management
Angola 2005	USAID	Input for health programming
Benin 2006	MOH	Input for 5-year prioritization strategy
Pakistan 2006	USAID	Priority for health system activities
Yemen 2006+	MOH	Framework health sector review
Malawi	USAID	Input into bilateral design
Ghana	USAID	Input into assessment of insurance
S. Sudan 2007	MOH	Input into GAVI HSS proposal
Vietnam 2008	PEPFAR	District performance assessment
Namibia 2008	MOH	Adapted for health sector review
Nigeria 2008	Secretary of Primary Care	State performance assessment

# Feedback from users

- “It helped me think through or think differently about various aspects of the health system.”
- “I was able to be more comprehensive.”
- “I used it as a guide, more informally, and as a reference.”
- “Even the areas that one has no information about--it is useful to understand what is not known. Just the fact that key information cannot be quickly obtained from key individuals can be very telling.”
- “The tool provided me with a framework to structure and analyze the data I was collecting. It helped me produce a more thoughtful report.”



**Using the *Health Systems Assessment Approach* to assess Benin's health systems performance**

**Small Group Exercise**

# Situation – Benin plans to apply for GF health system strengthening grant

- You are part of a Benin health system assessment team collecting data on the country's health system
- Your sub-team, composed of both in-country and expat experts, is responsible for assessing the function (Flip Chart page nearest you)
- You have returned from your field visits within Benin and are now reviewing your data:
  1. Statistics from Health Systems database
  2. Summary of Benin data from 2006 assessment report

# Exercise – 25 minutes

Individually review data (5 min)

Discuss / agree

- Major strengths of your functional area
- Major weaknesses of your functional area
- What opportunities do you see for your functional area in strengthening Benin's Health System
- What would be your top recommendation?
  
- Capture ideas on flipchart
- Take 25 minutes for entire task

# Benin Team Report Out

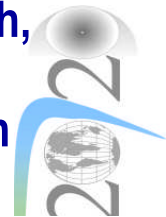
- You have completed the assessment of your health system function and must present your top recommendation to the Minister of Health at a stakeholder workshop **TOMORROW**
- 1 minute to share recommendation
- Bonus for cutting across multiple functions

# Rapid Assessment of Benin's Health System Actual Findings and Recommendations

August 2006

Mission USAID : Grâce Adeya, Alphonse Bigirimana, Karen Cavanaugh,  
Lynne Miller Franco

In collaboration with the Technical Committee of the Ministry of Health  
established by Ministerial order No.1268



# Health system strengthening options:

- **Transparency and accountability.**
  - Strengthen the **COGECS** (community health management committees) through training and other steps to help them to carry out their supervision mission more effectively
  - Strengthen the **Consumer Defense League** by defining consumer rights in health;
  - Create an **enabling environment** that publicly identifies cases of corruption, abuse, violation of professional codes, cases of impunity, etc.

# Health system strengthening options:

- Strengthen role of **Inspector General** with independent authority and incentives to use this authority.
- Publish comprehensive book of **health laws and regulations**. Share widely.
- Expand **private sector** engagement in the health system (beyond providers to all those interested in health system performance).

# Health system strengthening options:

- Use **contracts** with explicit expectations for transfer of funds between levels.
- Structure **human resource** incentives and sanctions that foster desired behaviors.
- Clarify the organization of the health **service delivery model**.
  - Share vision of how health services are expected to be delivered (which facilities do what; which workers do what)

# Health system strengthening options:

- Improve health service **access for the poorest**
  - Seek other ways to use **Indigent Fund**
    - Financing *mutuel* membership for the poorest
    - Reimbursing private facilities for serving the poorest.
  - **Lift user fees** for key services (assisted deliveries, cesarians) in areas of extreme poverty or nationally, following analysis of real costs and financing options.

# Health system strengthening options:

- Improve effectiveness of health spending
  - Develop allocation criteria:
    - Criteria such as population, poverty rate, prospects for generating local revenues, rural:urban mix, specific needs.
  - Explore possibility of reorienting unusually high pharma spending
    - This would require in-depth study to understand actual spending patterns.

# Health system strengthening options

d1

- *Increase public spending on health*
  - Considering :
    - Direct increase in government budget share & level
    - Specific taxes, such as tobacco, alcohol.
  - World Bank write-off of Benin' debt should allow country to invest more heavily in health.

**Slide 27**

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**d1**

Should there be a "(3)" on this slide?

dclendenning, 8/31/2006

# We are convinced that:

Benin has the opportunity to make a great leap forward in health – the structures, policies and regulations are all in place – They simply need to be operationalized.

# We welcome your feedback

<http://www.healthsystems2020.org/content/resource/detail/528/>

- Overall observations about the assessment tool?
- Challenges / factors in making recommendations?
- Imagine doing an assessment like this in a country setting – what do you see as essential elements / steps that you think should be part of the process?
- What did you need more of in order to come up with informed recommendations?
  - What levels of information would have been useful?
- What kinds of applications do you see for the Health Systems Assessment tool?