

Concept Note

January, 2021

EPHS Implementation Guidance Strategic plan for progressive realization of the Somalia EPHS 2020

Background

Following the ratification of the Sustainable Development Goals, Somalia has expressed its commitment to progress toward Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to improve the health of the population and enhance economic development, and programmatically defined this with a roadmap in 2019. As part of its efforts, and to strengthen capacities and tools, the country has revised the Essential Package of Health Services (EPHS) originally introduced in 2009. Result of a one-year work, the EPHS 2020 is based on extensive review of experience, available evidence, disease burden, the country context and the lessons learned from the design and implementation of the previous package.

The development of EPHS 2020 has benefited from broad consultation with all relevant stakeholders and significant contributions provided by expert advisors and experienced implementers knowledgeable on the country context. The package was presented by the Federal Ministry of Health to partners in December 2020, the document is being finalized in January 2021.

The EPHS document clearly explains the principles and rationale for the essential service package, as well as the strategic approach to deliver incrementally along the dimensions of universal health coverage.

In order to be completed and operationalized, the EPHS 2020 needs comprehensive implementation guidance, including strategic plan, tools for operational planning at subnational level, management, implementation and monitoring tools.

Rationale

The work to develop a revised EPHS was driven by strategic and programmatic considerations and informed, besides other analysis and evidence, by lessons learned from the design and implementation of the EPHS 2009. From these lessons emerged the challenge, due to the lack of clear implementation guidance, to provide standards, tools and models to follow and gather information to learn along the way.

There is full consensus within the health authorities and with partners about the need to guide the progressive realisation of the EPHS and its dynamic application across different contexts and actors.

The EPHS 2020 defines a set of standardized interventions to be delivered across the 5 levels of health care system in Somalia. It is designed to be the “common denominator” for health service delivery across health sector levels (delivery platforms), type of service providers (public, private) and across a range of service purchasers and funding sources (government, individuals / communities, development partners, other significant financiers). In addition, dialogue with the Health Cluster is currently ongoing for adoption of the EPHS 2020 in humanitarian interventions.

The demanding path that led to the EPHS 2020, founded on agreed principles and shared commitment, has built consensus on *what* the essential package for Somalia should be. The work ahead is to guide on *how* this will be realized, based on principles and commitment and thoughtfully tailored to the contextual realities.

Among the evident challenges is the limitation of resources: human, financial and technical resources. Considering these challenges, the EPHS 2020 implementation guidance will provide technical directions to address system weaknesses with tailored operational plans that can improve the delivery of standardized health services to be made available for a wider population. It will optimize, align and raise additional resources for the implementation of EPHS 2020.

Scope of work

The purpose of this work is to develop the document EPHS Implementation Guidance - Strategic plan for progressive realization of the Somalia EPHS 2020.

The EPHS 2020 document provides detailed directions of what is expected in the guidance document for a progressive implementation of the package and strengthening of the systems and functions that are instrumental to its effectiveness.

Guidance is needed to translate the EPHS strategic approach into implementation, providing tools to tailor plans and pace to the local context considering the baseline situation of the existing services current service availability, available resources (human – financial – technical) and opportunities to optimize and increase and increase them resources, existing capacities, emerging events while maintaining a clear focus on equity and making services available to wider Somali population.

On the other hand, besides the incremental and sequencing of the interventions, some concrete planning and specific tools are needed to standardize the service delivery and define functions and their attribution by level of government management and across other stakeholders. The coordination function of health authorities at every level is critical to maintain ownership, to monitor progress and to establish mutual accountability. The actual implementation of the package may take a “S shape” with phasing of interventions to be considered for planning and setting targets.

The guidance document should be agile, with visual tools where appropriate, templates and examples, consistently making reference to the EPHS document.

Guiding Principles of EPHS Implementation Plan:

- Equity, expanding the coverage of EPHS interventions in an equitable manner and covering wider population
- Maximizing efficiency in delivery of EPHS
- Improving accountability for results
- Enhancing the coordination in delivery of EPHS

The EPHS Implementation Guidance will include:

- The overall strategic plan for EPHS implementation in the country.
- Define concrete steps to implement the EPHS 2020 considering:
 - high impact, highly cost-effective interventions delivered equitably with currently available resources and progressively sequencing in additional interventions as more resources become available
 - service delivery models based on areas of care – primary care, emergency care, surgical care. That is, demand driven services for primary care can include interventions that may appear complicated, but only require simple integrated delivery (example: palliative care for cancer may simply need painkillers). Or intervention that, per se, do not qualify as high impact / highly cost-effective, but become an appropriate addition if integrated and responding to needs (example: oxygen therapy serves pneumonia treatment as well as emergency care for COPD).
 - Interdependence, referral and task shifting across service delivery platforms (example: mental health care referred to higher level in low capacity settings, shifted to lower level closer to community when capacity improves.

- Incremental service delivery based on realistic assumptions about future financial availability.
- Tools for operational planning at subnational levels, including timelines and resource management
- Guide on standard of health service quality including minimum standards, quality improvement systems, and the system to oversee health service quality.
- Define standard process and mechanisms for monitoring the delivery of EPHS aligned with existing health sector documents and using routine data collection complemented by data from other sources.
- Tools for the management and coordination described in the EPHS document,
- Options for funding arrangements, including the mechanism to have all contributions recorded in the country health budget with the Ministry of Health.

For many of the above, existing tools and guides by expert organizations and country experience could be used as a basis and adapted to the specific context.

In addition, the guidance would advise on a living agenda of research and learning to promote documentation of experience along the way.

Structure and process

This work will be carried out using internal and external expertise and contributions from partners under MoH leadership, it entails:

- Short term consultants with solid technical expertise and professional experience to support the development of the guidance The consultants will work under leadership of the Federal Ministry of health) (The ToR will refers to this concept note)
- The expert advisory panel from Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) and concerned partners to provide technical back-up and advice (as was the case for the development of the revised EPHS 2020).
- Stakeholders consultation (virtual), using the current taskforce established to provide input the development of the investment case for the health sector and health sector coordination committee.
- Facilitation, communication support and close monitoring of progress by reference persons in the Federal Ministry Health in the task force (leading) and WHO and GFF (as support).

Timelines: As soon as possible. Estimated 45 day task.

Additional notes

Some additional, practical pieces of work are ongoing or planned, to make the EPHS operational.

- Finalization, editing, lay-out, printing and distribution of the EPHS document and technical annex. The same for this guidance document in due time.
- An interactive, online version of the EPHS to be developed. Once tested, this digital version of the Somalia EPHS 2020 will go live on the MoH website for wide information and use.

Reference documents

- Somalia EPHS 2020
- Health Sector Strategic plan (HSSP II) 2017-2021
- Somali Roadmap towards Universal Health Coverage 2019-2023
- Strategic guidance for public private partnership in Health services in Somalia, June 2020
- Somalia Health Demographic Survey 2020
- Somalia SARA report
- Somalia resource mapping
- Somalia Aid Flow report 2019