

# Priority Setting

RESEARCH FOR HEALTH

A MANAGEMENT  
PROCESS FOR  
COUNTRIES

The COHRED Group



Supporting research and innovation systems for health, equity and development

# Priority Setting

## RESEARCH FOR HEALTH

- WHY SET PRIORITIES?
- HOW TO SET THEM?
- HOW TO BEST MANAGE THE PRIORITY SETTING PROCESS SO THAT IT RESULTS IN ACTION?

National priorities for research for health are essential for countries to guide research expenditure; promote science - technology - innovation for health; stimulate human resource development for research and negotiate with partners for targeted funding and long-term efforts. A national research and innovation system needs focus - priorities - targets and milestones. Without priorities, development is blind. With priorities, the science and innovation sectors can flourish to support development, equity and health.

Over the past 15 years COHRED (Council on Health Research for Development) has supported countries in setting national priorities for research for health. Based on this experience COHRED has developed an integrative approach that takes the user through the management cycle of a complete priority setting process. Each step offers a variety of tools and methodologies commonly used in priority setting, tips and specific country examples.

### Technical support and services proposed by COHRED

- Situational assessment
- Priority setting process design
- Priority setting process facilitation
- Priority setting process evaluation

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**Full pdf approach can be downloaded from the following link:**

[http://www.cohred.org/downloads/Priority\\_Setting\\_COHRED\\_approach\\_August\\_2010.pdf](http://www.cohred.org/downloads/Priority_Setting_COHRED_approach_August_2010.pdf)

## ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Map available data on research for health governance and management, to inform priority setting
- **Profile** – expand map with analysis of current production, capacity and use of research for health
- **Performance assessment** – expand profile with analysis of research for health performance

## CHOOSE A METHOD

- Decide on methods to be used to **identify priority issues**, consider use of more than one method to optimise the usefulness of results, adapt methods to specific setting, available data and resources, and to local needs
- Decide on technique to be used to **rank priority issues**, adapt ranking technique to specific setting and needs

## SET THE PRIORITIES

- Apply defined **methods**
- Implement the **communication plan**
- **Monitor** the priority setting process
- **Evaluate outputs and outcomes** of the priority setting process

## SET THE SCENE

- **Focus and Scope** – decide on the area to address; timeframe; periodicity; and extent (national, sub national, institutional) of priority setting
- **Ethical standards** – define the standards with which the priority setting process should comply
- **Engage partners** – formalise the partnerships arrangement and define responsibilities


## PLAN PRIORITY SETTING

Develop a plan of work with

- Expected outputs
- People involved and their responsibilities
- Plans for data collection and analysis, communication, and monitoring and evaluation
- Timelines and budget for data collection and analysis, communication, and monitoring and evaluation

## MAKE PRIORITIES WORK

- Ensure **action after priority setting**, set up strategies to support the integration of defined priorities into the national agenda
- **Monitor and evaluate** how priorities are being integrated in the national agenda; how research results are being used in decision making, funding allocation and research outcomes
- Set a time, date and process for the **next review of research for health priorities**, and allow appeals to be heard and fairly treated

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- Understand the environment in which priority setting takes place
  - Define the focus and scope of the priority setting process
  - Use methods best suited to local context and needs
  - Develop a management framework to ensure best use of resources
  - Implement the plan of work
  - Ensure action after priority setting, and continuous review of progress

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