

HEALTH RESEARCH POLICY

NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH POLICY FRAMEWORK

ESTABLISHING THE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE HEALTH RESEARCH SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Guiding principles

- ▶ Develop a strategy for policy development and implementation, whether top-down or bottom-up; through incremental change or major reform
- ▶ Assess the level of authority required for each element of the research policy framework:
 - Act (Legislative);
 - Regulation (President, Prime minister, Minister);
 - Policy (Ministerial, Provincial, Institutional)
- ▶ Plan the actions required for authorisation of the necessary acts, regulations and policies
- ▶ Use transparent, consultative processes that build ownership to develop and implement the policy framework
- ▶ Ensure that policy development and evaluation are based on sound evidence

Level 1. Statement of intent	A political statement of scope and purpose – the higher the ownership (Minister, Prime Minister, President) – the greater the commitment
For example include a statement in the National Development Policy or an Act of Parliament	
Sets government aims for research -	Improve population health, reduce health inequities, increase the efficiency, quality and safety of the health system, enhance socio-economic development, generate new knowledge, etc.
Outlines the values to guide policy -	Ethics, equity, social justice, sustainable development, excellence.
Establishes the structures to develop and implement policy -	Directorate in the Ministry of Health, S&T, or Education; Academy of Medical Sciences; Inter-ministerial Commission for Health Research; Health Research Council or National Research Council dept;
Level 2. Policy goals & strategies	Identify the goals required to achieve the policy's aims and develop strategies that will achieve them
Potential policy goals	Example strategies
National health research production that addresses national health research needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Credible processes to set and update research priorities - Human Resources for research production, management and use aligned with priorities - Research financing (national and foreign) aligned with priorities and human resource needs
Research conducted in line with the values of the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a system of ethical review - Design an equity focus into priority setting processes
Effective use of research findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feed user demands into priority setting processes - Enhance systematic review and synthesis capacity - Develop a system to facilitate communication and uptake of research
A conducive environment for research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structured career paths with merit based promotion - Open, competitive, peer-reviewed funding mechanisms - Capacity strengthening at the institution and system levels
Enhance socio-economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of innovation and commercialisation capacity - Introduction of catalysts for technology transfer - Establish incentives for private sector involvement
Level 3. Implementation	Planning and execution
Prioritise policy goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Select those likely to have greatest immediate impact and facilitate future health research system development
Secure human and financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long term commitments to make the proposed changes and establish sustainable structures - Political commitment - staff and budget are the clearest indicators
Manage strategy implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement with stakeholders required to make changes - Clear, achievable targets and facilitating the change process
Level 4. Policy cycle	Address secondary, then subsequent, policy goals
Ensure effective implementation, and that policy development continues past initial goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish an M&E system to assess policy effectiveness - Report back regularly to stakeholders on progress - Review policy needs on a systematic basis