

National priorities for research for health are essential for countries to guide research expenditure; promote science, technology and innovation for health; stimulate human resource development for research; and negotiate with partners for targeted funding and long-term efforts.

With priorities, the science and innovation sectors can flourish to support health, equity and development.

SETTING THE SCENE

DEFINING THE PRIORITY SETTING PROCESS

Define focus and scope

- Decide on the areas to address (i.e. diseases, health system, health research system, research institutions, or the overall science-technology-and-innovation environment)
- Decide on the timeframe, regularity and extent (national, sub-national, institutional) of priority setting

Set ethical standards

- Define the standards with which the priority setting process should comply

Engage partners

- Formalise the partnership arrangement and defining responsibilities
- Ensure the process is inclusive

SETTING THE PRIORITIES

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PRIORITY SETTING PROCESS

Decide on methods to identify and rank priority issues

- Choose appropriate methods for local context and needs:
 - methods maximising the compilation of existing data
 - methods providing insight in future health priorities
- For optimising usefulness of results, consider using more than one method to identify priority issues
- Choose ranking method adapted to specific setting, available data and resources, and to local needs
- Ensure transparency and inclusiveness throughout the ranking process, as the existing techniques are often a combination of factors, figures and value judgments

Develop a management framework

- Coordinate and balance the priority setting strategy with the human and financial dimensions
- Ensure achievement of the desired outcomes
- Define timelines, expected outputs, people involved and their responsibilities, and budget for the entire priority setting process

Implement the plan of work

- Apply defined methods
- Monitor deviations and take corrective actions to either go back to the initial plan or to decide in an informed way on a new course of action

MAKING PRIORITIES WORK

ENSURING ACTION AFTER PRIORITY SETTING, AND CONTINUALLY REVIEWING PROGRESS

Ensure action after priority setting

- Set up strategies to support the integration of defined priorities into the international research for health agenda
- Use research for health agenda in negotiations for funding nationally and internationally

Monitoring and evaluating (M&E)

- Integrate priorities into the national research for health agenda
- Use research results in decision making and funding allocation
- Allow some financial flexibility for innovation, exploratory, curiosity-driven research, or unexpected health challenges and opportunities

Ensure continuous review

- Set a time, date and process for the next review of national priorities for research for health – and allowing appeals to be heard and fairly treated
- Make improvements in the next priority cycle using lessons learned from previous one