

Update, December 2009

The Interagency Working Group on Costing (IAWG-COSTING) has collaborated on a number of projects in the last few months of 2009 including further development of the Unified Health Model, joint capacity development workshops in Senegal and South Africa and joint missions in Nigeria to support the development of state plans for improving health systems. The joint capacity development workshops were targeted at academic institutions, individual consultants mostly with expertise in Health Economics, and a targeted set of UN staff.

From November 18-20, 2009, the IAWG-COSTING met in NY to discuss plans for 2010 for continued collaborations as well as a focused discussion on the Unified Health Model. The discussions on collaboration included developing plans for coordinating support for national plan development, capacity development workshops, and joint missions for doing costing, budgeting, financing and health strategy development.

Some members of the IAWG-COSTING have been involved in the development of an online costing tool guide. This guide allows users to select an appropriate costing tool after answering a short series of questions to help. Video tutorials on the use of the guide are provided along with details about the tools including how to access the tools. The online costing tool guide will be launched in early 2010 on the PMNCH/WHO website. For additional information or questions please email: costingtools@who.int

The Unified Health Model is envisioned as a single model to be used for supporting the costing, budgeting, financing and strategy development of the health sector in developing countries with a focus on MDG-related health activities. This model seeks to leverage the best components of the different tools that currently exist and will be built in a modular fashion allowing for program specific costing as well as health sector costing. The agencies from the IAWG-COSTING intend to support this tool as the default tool and plan to have joint training sessions and missions involving this tool once it is ready for roll-out. Until the Unified Health Model is ready for release, the IAWG-COSTING has discussed supporting the use of the MBB tool though this support will require a formal sign-off by the agencies' respective technical directors.

The Unified Health Model discussions consisted of a review of present status of module development, project management (issues including funding, organization, roles and responsibilities) and ended with an identification of next steps. The Unified Health Model project has been broken up into three main activities: (1) Model development, (2) Capacity Development Tools and (3) Field Testing. For the Model Development stage, a large set of modules have been identified and are in different stages of development. Some of the research for the module development is being performed by members of the IAWG-COSTING while other sections involve leveraging key experts in the respective areas.

Modules that are being developed include the following structure:

Model Framework: Bottleneck, Strategies within program modules (i.e. training, demand, IEC, supervision, private/public), Private/public

Systems: Facilities/Infrastructure/ICT, Financial Space, Health Financing, Governance, HR, Logistics, HMIS

Cross cutting: User interface, BCC/IEC, Equity, Gender

Programs: TB, HIV, Malaria, Nutrition, NCD, MCH, WASH, Neglected Tropical Disease

The goal is to have an advanced version of the Unified Health Model and the corresponding Capacity Development Tools ready by the end of 2010 for field testing. To achieve this goal, the IAWG-COSTING will require sufficient funding as well as appropriate time allocated from the technical experts in the respective agencies.