

***Second Annual Inter-Agency Country Health Sector Teams' Meeting:  
Improving Implementation  
Bamako, Mali, June 15-16, 2009***

# **Joint Assessment of National Strategies**

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Chair of the IHP+ Inter Agency Working Group  
on National Policies, Strategies and Plans

## The Working Group:

- Established since April 2008
- Representatives: Civil Society, AusAID, DFID, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Commission, GAVI Alliance, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNAIDS, UNFPA, WHO, the World Bank
- Purpose: To develop a mechanism for carrying out Joint Assessments of National Strategies in consultation with key stakeholders

### Context: Paris Declaration – Accra Agenda for Action

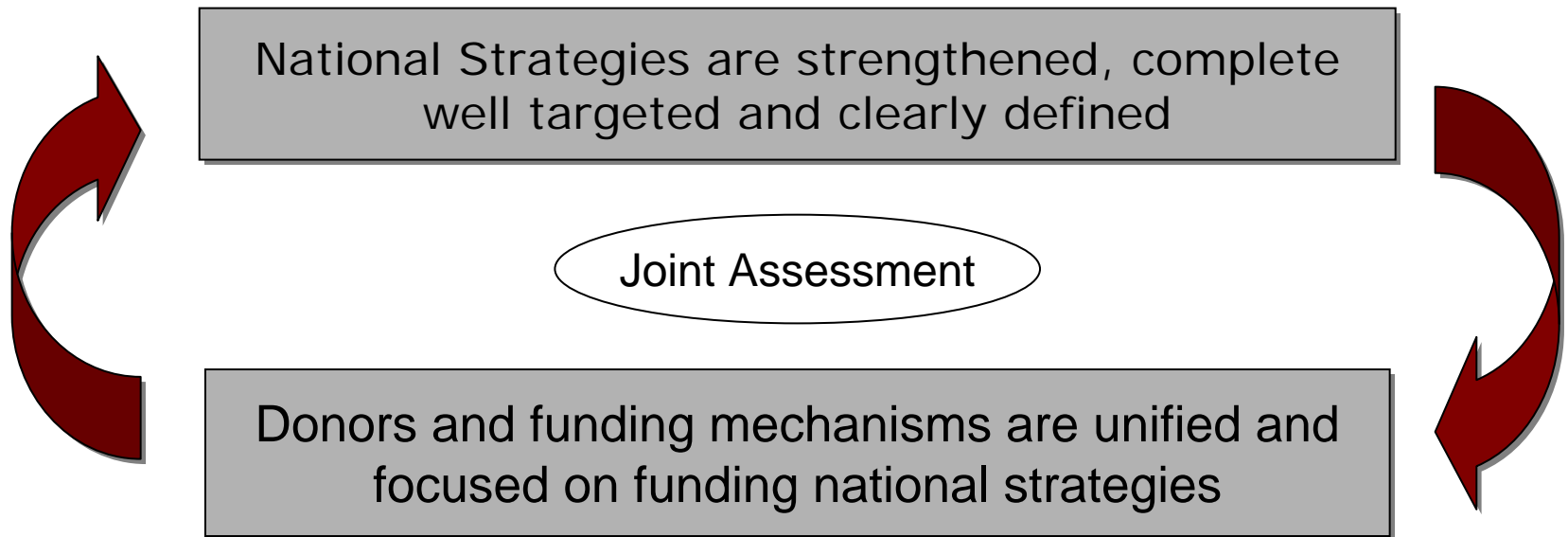
- National Governments ownership – setting up general health policy directions and corresponding national strategies, based on PHC values and principles
  - Development partners – harmonization and alignment
- ⇒ **Need for a mechanism to assist Governments and Partners in the operationalization of Paris Declaration principles**

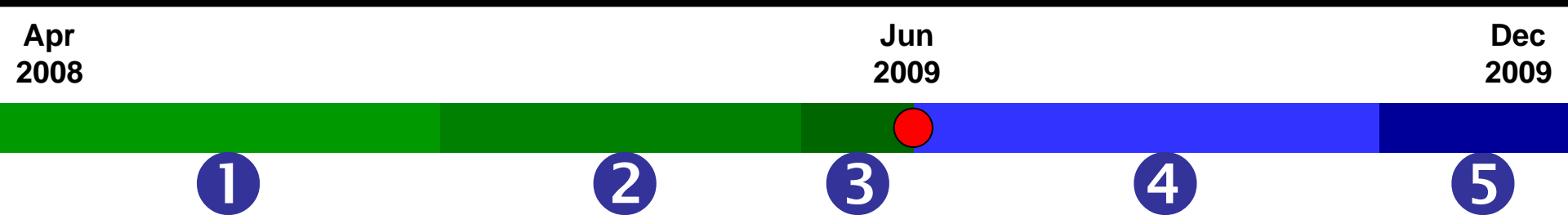
## Purposes:

- to assist countries and their development partners **to strengthen the quality, content and process** of national strategy
- **to give confidence to development partners to increase financing for national strategies for longer periods**, thus ensuring countries have access to substantively more predictable and better aligned funding
- **to reduce current transaction costs** (arising for example from multiple proposal-development and reporting processes)
- **to ensure that appraisal of national strategies is based on more transparent, predictable and accepted criteria**

## Principles:

The Joint Assessment process will **combine a country-level knowledge with an independent element** to ensure robust, consistent and transparent assessments of national strategies





- 1 • **A framework document** setting out the general principles that would guide the Joint Assessment process
- 2 • **A list of essential attributes** of good national plans and strategies which would form the basis of the Joint Assessment
- 3 • **Phase I Country consultations** on concept, attributes and options for carrying out the Joint Assessment Process: Ghana, Mali, Zambia, Burundi (HIV/AIDS), Tajikistan (TB), Viet Nam
- 3 • **A draft Joint Assessment Tool** to facilitate consistent assessment of national plans and strategies
- 3 • A country-based **Joint Assessment Process draft document**
- 4 • **Piloting** the Joint Assessment process
- 5 • **Final agreement** on tool and process – final documents

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## Step 1: a) Defining principles



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1 Basic principles: the Joint Assessment process:

- should be **generic**
- should be **country–based and country led**
- should contain an **independent element** to ensure credibility
- needs to be **grounded in country context**
- should **complement and build** on any relevant existing joint assessment or appraisal processes already used
- should not be a one-off process, but instead be **incremental**
- should be **transparent and credible**

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## Step 1: b) Defining a list of "generic" attributes



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### 1 *5 categories of attributes:*

- Situation analysis and the coherence of strategies and plans with the analysis
- Process through which national plans and strategies have been developed
- Financing, auditing and procurement arrangements
- Implementation and management arrangements
- Results, monitoring, review and dialogue mechanisms

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## Step 2: Country Consultation (1)



### Objectives / critical questions:

- Get views of country stakeholders on the attributes
- Get views of country stakeholders on the process
  - o Timing of process in relation to national processes
  - o Balance between country ownership and independent element ("options")
  - o Selection and management of reviewers
  - o Balance between 'hard' outcome (for funding purposes) vs. 'soft' outcome (feedback to countries on strengths and weaknesses)

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## Step 2: Country Consultation (2)



### Main findings:

#### **1. Concept**

- Generally favorable
- Express varying degrees of skepticism (particularly on donors' processes change)
- Joint Assessment must be context specific
- Creates expectations

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## Step 2: Country Consultation (3)

1

2

### Main findings:

#### *2. Attributes*

- Having agreed attributes is a positive step forward
- Draft tool needs to be simplified (structure and language)
- Need to expand scope so as to cover additional areas appraised by donors: tech programmes, gender, institutional, environmental, procurement, FMA, .. (specific attributes)

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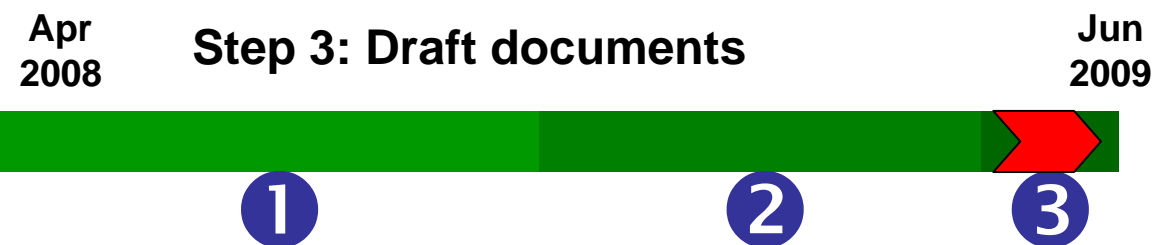
## Step 2: Country Consultation (4)



### Main findings:

#### 3. *Process*

- Reviewers should include a mix of national stakeholders and independent reviewers
- Stakeholders prefer a Joint Appraisal Approach (following in-country initial assessment)
- Different views on timing of the Joint Assessment:
  - Joint Assessment to be done on a strategy not yet approved by country authorities (planning & political cycles)
  - Joint Assessment should occur throughout the planning process
  - Joint Assessment to be done for an almost final document

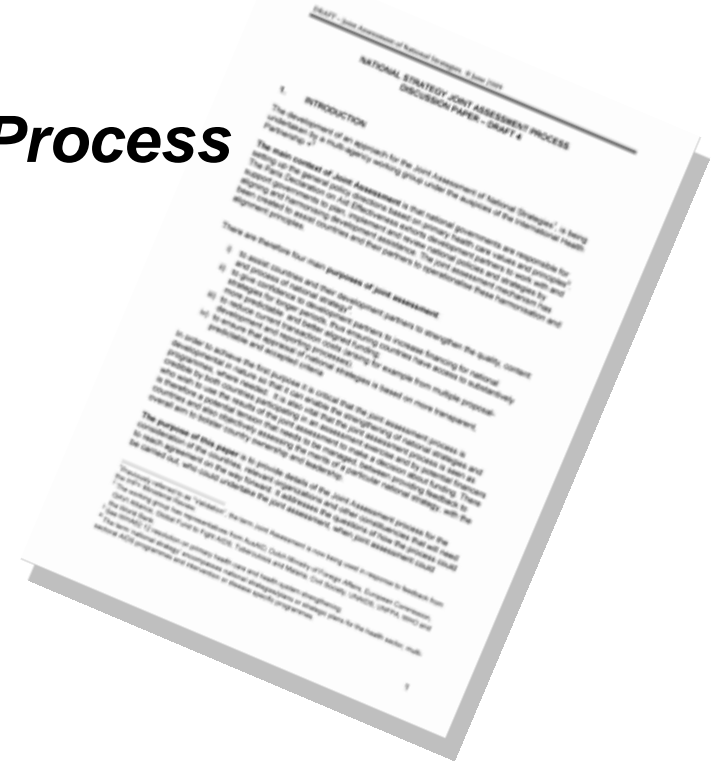


**2 documents prepared for the SuRG meeting:**

***Draft Tool***



***Draft Process***



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## Step 3: a) Draft Tool

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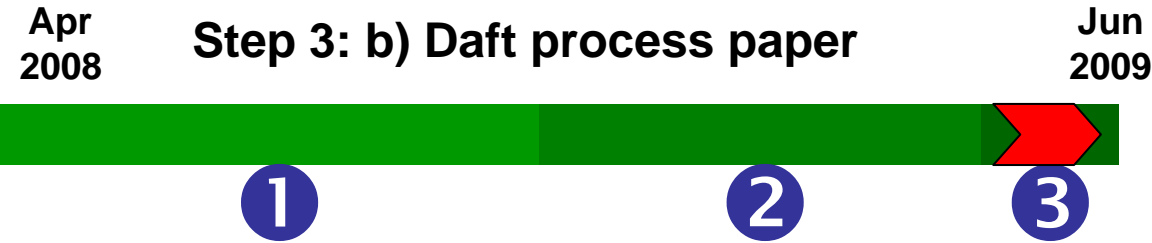
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### JOINT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

(A) Original Attribute	(B) No.	(C) Essential Characteristics of the Original Attributes
<b>1. SITUATION ANALYSIS AND PROGRAMMING</b>		
<b>Soundness of analysis/assessment underlying identification of the programming contained in the national strategy</b>		
National strategy is based on a sound situational and response analysis of the context (including political, social, cultural, gender, epidemiological, legal, and institutional determinants)	1.1	The situation analysis is based on a comprehensive and participatory analysis of health determinants and health outcome trends within the epidemiological, political, socio-economic and organizational context prevailing in the country.
	1.2	The analysis uses disaggregated data to describe progress towards achieving overall health sector policy objectives in line with the policy dimensions of resolution WHA 2009 62.12: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal coverage, to improve health equity</li> <li>• Service delivery, to make health systems people-centred</li> <li>• Public policies, to promote and protect the health of communities</li> <li>• Leadership, to make health authorities more reliable</li> </ul>
	1.3	An analysis of past and current health sector responses identifies priority problem areas and programmatic gaps
Clearly-defined priority areas, goals, objectives, interventions, and expected outcomes/products that contribute to improving health outcomes and meeting national and global commitments (such as the Millennium Development Goals and WHA resolution on PHC a	1.4	Objectives are Measurable, Realistic and Time-bound, and proposed strategies are technically sound.
	1.5	Goals, objectives and interventions address health priorities, equitable access, quality and health outcomes across all population sub-groups, especially vulnerable groups.
Planned interventions are feasible, locally appropriate, equitable and based on evidence and good practice, including consideration of effectiveness and sustainability (both financial and programmatic)	1.6	Planned strategies and interventions are based upon analysis of effectiveness, impact and sustainability, and clearly identify how they contribute to expected results
	1.7	The plan identifies specific equity, financial, human resource, and technical sustainability gaps and constraints.
	1.8	Plan describes short- and long-term strategies to meet technical assistance requirements for its implementation.
Both assessment of risks (analysing feasibility of and potential obstacles to implementation) and proposed mitigation strategies (including specifying technical assistance needs) are present and credible	1.9	The plan includes a risk assessment of potential barriers to successful implementation

**To be tested  
and piloted  
In countries**



## What?

- Analyze National Strategy document, and all other related relevant documentation, processes, implementation mechanisms and capacity against agreed attributes
- Other related documentation covers all multi-sectoral and sub-sectoral documents. Exhaustive list attached to the document
- Joint assessment complement review of documents with interviews and observations at country level

# Step 3 – Drafts documents (4)

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## Step 3: b) Draft process paper

Jun  
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When?

1

Countries **request** and **initiate** Joint Assessment before submission of strategy to national gov't approval **1**

2

Team of **reviewers** carry out Joint Assessment using the assessment tool **2**

3

Team of reviewers prepare an **assessment profile** **3**

Countries **revise & adjust** national strategy & **submit** final strategy for national gov't approval **4**

Assessment profile **revised** based on changes made during national approval **5**

Countries make **funding requests** to external donors & domestic funding

National review processes **monitor progress** in actions suggested in assessment profiles **6**



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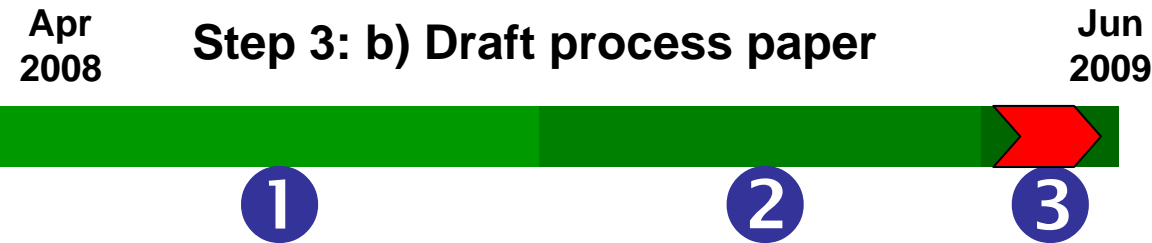
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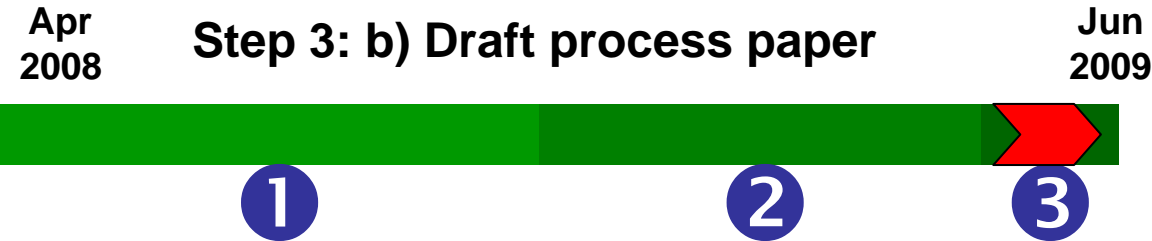
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## Who?

- Should include Independent reviewers
- Independent reviewers need to meet set of agreed competencies AND good understanding of country context
- Independent reviewers need to have sufficient credibility and legitimacy for both countries and funders
- Independent reviewers can come from the country, the Region or an international pool of expertise, as long as they demonstrate independence and meet the requisite competencies



## Outcomes:

- Not a “yes” or “no” funding recommendation
- Constructive feedback to countries and donors on the strengths and weaknesses of the national strategy
- Countries should have access to any necessary technical and financial support:
  - for preparing and submitting their national strategy
  - for strengthening weaknesses identified by the Joint Assessment
  - for longer term improvements in the strategy
  - to ensure inclusive, participatory strategy development and annual reviews
- Transparency is critical to the success of the process

# Step 3 – Drafts documents (7)

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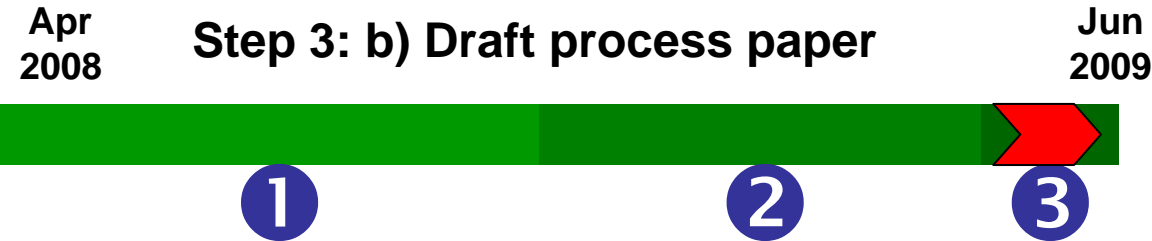
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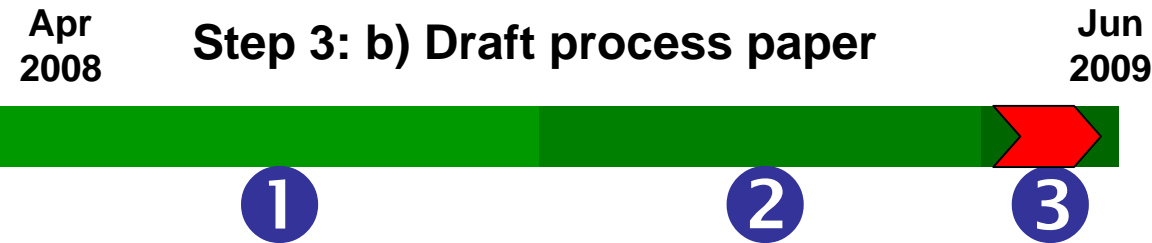
### Outcomes

Attribute Category		
Situation Analysis and Program	Strengths	To be reviewed by
	Weaknesses	
	Implications for Successful Implementation	
	Suggested Actions	
Process		
Finance and Auditing		
Implementation and Management		
Results, Monitoring and Review		



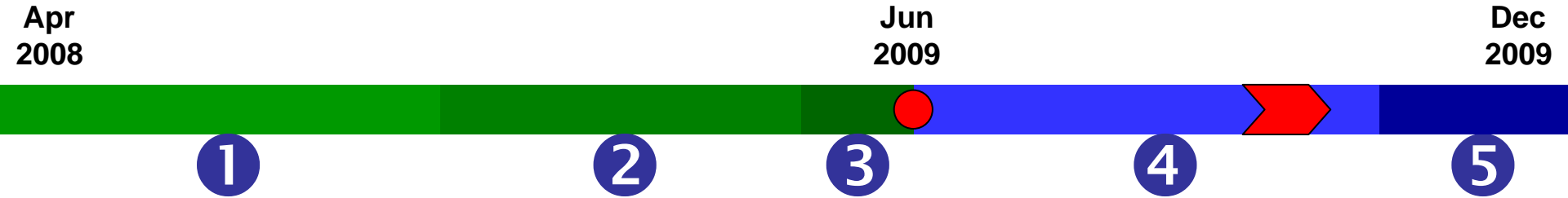
## Post Joint Assessment:

- What happens after a joint assessment?
- Monitor progress towards strengthening aspects assessed as needing improvement
- Other expectations? Increased fundings? Better predictability?



## Questions raised:

- Strategic coordination of the joint assessment:
  - Existing structure?
  - Contracted organisation?
  - New structure?
- Operational aspects of Joint Assessments:
  - Managed by coordination structure?
  - Contracted out by coordination structure?
  - Organised at country level and contracted by Governments?
- Funding of Joint Assessments?



- 4 • Testing and piloting of the Joint Assessment tool and process in a few countries
- 5 • Revision of process and tool
- 5 • Final version ready for implementation

**From your own perspective:**

- 1. What is the added value of the proposed Joint Assessment Process?**
- 2. What challenges do you foresee in the implementation of the proposed Joint Assessment Process?**
- 3. How confident are you that the proposed Joint Assessment Process will lead to more aligned and predictable funding?**